

# IN THESE TIMES

The Shame of  
New York

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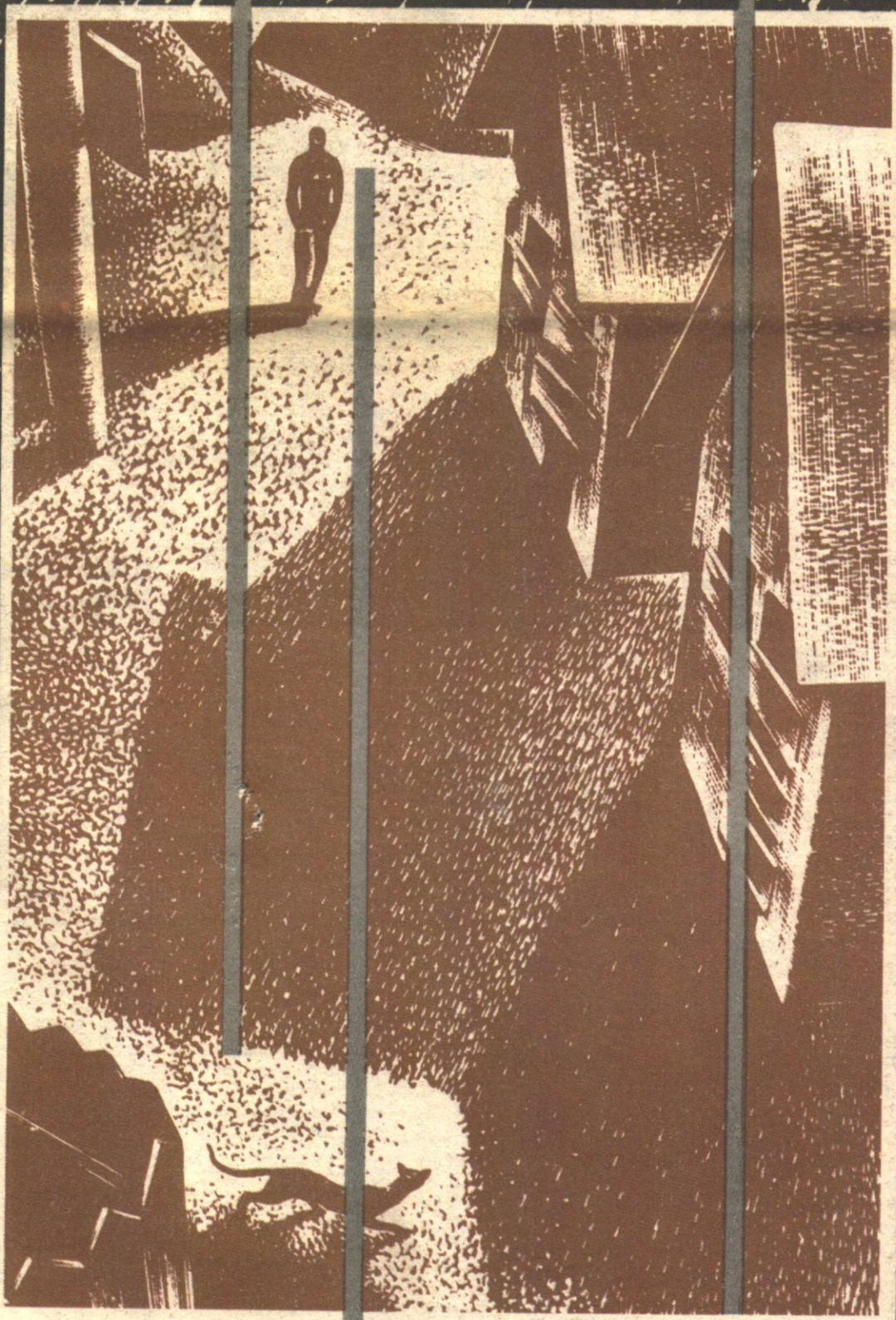
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In Tchula, Mississippi, getting  
elected is not enough.

## The Trials of Mayor Eddie Carthan



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# THE INSIDE STORY



Marx would have associated TIME's "command economy" with Bonapartism rather than communism.

## Poland essay is a waste of Time

By John Judis

There are many reasons why the U.S. has not had a viable socialist movement, but among the more important has been the identification of socialism with the political system promulgated by the Soviet Union and its affiliated Communist parties. This has been made evident by the current reaction to the Polish crisis.

In Western Europe, where a popular left survived the Cold War years, Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the current suppression of the Polish Solidarity movement have propelled the left to demarcate socialism from Soviet communism more clearly. Each event has strengthened democratic socialist and "Eurocommunist" tendencies and has marginalized Soviet-aligned parties and factions.

But in the U.S. these events have prompted an unchallenged torrent of capitalist self-congratulation premised on the identity of communism and anti-capitalism—Stalin and Marx. *Time's* New Year essay on communism in Poland and the Soviet Union, "The Sceptre and the Sword," is a case in point.

This essay is a veritable minefield of misconceptions. But the opening account of the theory of communism will suffice:

*In theory, Communism was originally, and supposedly remains today, a social and political doctrine based on economic goals and means. The chief goal is an equitable distribution of the wealth that society produces. The principal means is a command economy, in which the state, rather than private individuals and enterprises, takes responsibility for all production and distribution.*

This is a semi-accurate reading of present day Soviet ideology, but it bears no resemblance to Marx's original idea of communism or to the principles that animate many democratic socialist movements. The essay is almost an exact inversion of the Marxist conception.

• The goals of communism, as understood originally by Marx, were political, social and individual, not economic. Marx defined communism's goal as "the restoration of man as a social, that is, human being" (*Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*) and as "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (*Communist Manifesto*).

In capitalism and prior modes of production, the de-

velopment of society and the individual were subordinated to economic goals—to the brute struggle for survival and the accumulation of capital. By developing human skills and technology to the point where it is possible for a society to devote progressively less time to producing the goods necessary for economic survival, capitalism paves the way for socialism and communism—societies where the development of the individual need no longer be dictated by economic necessity.

• Marx rejected the equal distribution of wealth as the goal of socialism and communism, although he thought basic equality would be a by-product of these societies. He described as "vulgar socialism" movements obsessed with redistribution of wealth rather than the social ownership and control of production.

• Marx repeatedly rejected the concept of a communist state as a contradiction in terms. He would have associated a "command economy" with Bonapartism rather than communism. "Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate," Marx wrote in criticizing the Gotha Program's concept of a "free state."

### Actual socialism.

But if the Soviet Union, China, Poland and Cuba are not socialist, what are they? There are no answers to this question within Marx's work, because he underestimated Western capitalism's capacity for renewal and reform. Nor did he anticipate that the revolutions in the name of socialism would occur in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America and would produce societies that bear little resemblance to the Marxist ideal.

Rudolf Bahro's *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, published in Western Germany in 1978, is to date the clearest attempt to explain the peculiar history of socialism since Marx's day. When his book appeared, Bahro, an East German technocrat, was tried and imprisoned as a West German spy and was later exiled to West Germany. It is a good antidote for *Time's* lectures on the Polish crisis.

Prior to Bahro's *The Alternative*, most theories of Soviet socialism either placed Lenin and Stalin in the unbroken succession of Czars or traced the failure of Soviet socialism on Stalin's ouster of Trotsky in the late '20s. But Bahro wrests Soviet socialism from both the hardline Sovietologists and the Trotskyists.

Bahro notes that the division of labor between manual and mental workers predates capitalism and is the foundation of the earliest class society in which the despot and priesthood exacted labor and tribute from the citizenry. The precondition for ending class society—for achieving socialism or communism—is a society in which the working majority had been educated for self-government and in which the productive forces had matured to the point that the working majority did not have to spend all its waking hours working or recovering from work.

On the eve of the 1917 revolution, Czarist Russia still contained elements of Asian despotism and feudalism. Its working class was tiny. The abolition of capitalist property did not lead to the abolition of classes, but to their reassertion in older forms.

"If the classes bound up with private property are destroyed or rendered impotent," Bahro writes, "then the earlier element of the division of manual and mental labor emerges once again as an autonomous factor of class formation."

The resulting society resembles the despotism that prevailed not only in Czarist Russia but also in ancient Egypt. "The pyramids certainly did not rest on exploitation by way of private property, and no more do the

monuments of Stalinism, which began with the mausoleum in which Lenin was mummified like a Pharaoh."

Bahro rejects any description of the Soviet Union or the Eastern European countries as socialist. "It is not even justified to describe them as 'early socialist' by analogy with the first phase of the capitalist era. In early capitalism, the fundamental features of the later full developed capitalist formations were already present, while in our case socialist as the decisive characteristic of socialism is still completely entailed by *etatism*."

But unlike, say, Sovietologist Richard Pipes, who has rested his case on the similarities between the current Soviet rulers and Ivan the Terrible, Bahro sees Soviet socialism as an important historical progression from Czarism. The task of the Russian Revolution, Bahro writes, "was not yet that of socialism, no matter how resolutely the Bolsheviks believed in this, but rather the rapid industrial development of Russia on a non-capitalist road."

"Without the apparatus of force the Bolsheviks set in motion," he writes, "Russia would today still be a peasant country, most probably on the capitalist road. Stalin's 'transformation of nature,' or the colonization of the North and Siberia, would have been as impossible as the construction of the Great Wall of China without forced labor on a major scale."

But Bahro argues that the Soviet Union—and even more so the Eastern European countries—have now achieved their historical objective: the peasantry has been destroyed, and a modern working class capable of self-initiative and political involvement has been created. These countries now find themselves in a classic Marxian contradiction between their existing (bureaucratic centralist) relations of production and the further development of their forces of production.

### Polish socialism.

Of course, *Time* sees the Polish crisis as a vindication of capitalism. But Bahro's neo-Marxist historical analysis is a far better guide to Poland.

Drawing an analogy to the theory of evolution, Bahro contends that just as the most advanced species do not evolve from what were the most advanced, but from a still unformed branch, Marxian socialism will not evolve directly from the most advanced capitalist societies, but from the "proto-socialist" societies of Eastern Europe.

It could indeed be argued that the Solidarity movement—for all its lack of historical pretension—was the most advanced socialist movement to date. Its attack against *nomenklatura*—the party's practice of appointing managers and officials from above—struck directly at the structure of the Polish state. In a society where private property had already been abolished, and the working class was reasonably educated, this attack against party prerogatives was actually a demand for the kind of workers' government that Marx described in *The Civil War in France*.

The Polish workers were trying to make in practice the same theoretical distinction that socialists in the West have been trying to make—between a socialism that fulfills the promise of bourgeois democracy and the despotism that prevails in the Soviet Union. ■

## Goodbye and hello

In *These Times* managing editor Lee Aitken, an outstanding editor who greatly improved the quality of the paper in her two years on the job, has resigned. Her replacement is Sheryl Larson, former editor of *d'ART*, an arts and entertainment weekly newspaper published by the *Minnesota Daily* in Minneapolis.

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## IN THESE TIMES

# Reagan may take a new tack on taxes

By Ruth Simon

WASHINGTON

**A**T A MID-DECEMBER PRESS conference, President Reagan pledged that he had "no plans for increasing taxes in any way" to reduce budget deficits. The president's plan, however, did not consider a deficit that may top \$200 billion in 1984, or a Congress that may not accept massive cuts in already decimated social programs. With top administration officials and leading congressional Republicans pushing for a tax hike, it is likely that the president will propose some type of revenue raiser in his Jan. 26 State of the Union address. But there is a steady stream of leaks from top administration officials about "revenue enhancements," which include a consumption tax on beer, cigarettes and liquor, and the elimination of some tax loopholes.

Members of Congress and their aides are drawing up their own laundry lists of tax proposals, which range from a new minimum tax on individuals and corporations to natural gas decontrol accompanied by a "temporary excise tax." Most of these proposals, like the consumption tax discussed by the president's advisors, would place the greatest burden on the working Americans who gained little from the tax cuts that are now bloating the deficit.

In September the administration promised a balanced budget by 1984 if Congress passed a package that included \$3 billion in "revenue enhancements" and \$13 billion in budget cuts for 1982. But as the economy slid deeper into recession, the administration's already optimistic numbers drifted even further from reality. In November, Reagan dropped his promise to balance the budget by 1984.

Officially the administration still clings to its September projections. But its recent estimates suggest that without any further tax increases or spending cuts, the deficit will climb to \$109 billion this year, \$152 billion in fiscal year 1983 and \$162 billion in fiscal year 1984. The largest deficit before this was \$66 billion in 1976. Estimates leaked from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) suggested even larger deficits of \$110 billion, \$175 billion and \$219 billion over the next three years.

Both the administration and the CBO believe that the economy will begin moving out of the recession in the second or third quarter of this year. Economic recovery normally means smaller deficits because tax revenues increase and social welfare payments decline. But the administration's massive tax cuts, coupled with a real increase in defense spending, have transformed traditional budget relationships. Unlike previous years, growth will not mean smaller deficits. And, says CBO head Alice Rivlin, "Escalating deficits in a period of economic recovery are likely to lead to higher interest rates and abort the recovery."

## Close the gap.

While Rivlin and other economists tend to downplay the significance of the 1982 budget, they believe that Congress must act quickly to reduce the budget gap in future years. "We can't write off fiscal year 1983 (which begins in October)," Rivlin told the annual meeting of the American Economic Association in late December. Getting deficits down and the economy going, she added, would require "drastic action before the 1982 election."

Not surprisingly, legislators are wary of passing a tax increase in an election year. Many, however, find their constituents' reactions to \$100 billion deficits even less appealing. "I don't want to raise taxes...but if the budget is going to be realistic and credible, we have to raise revenues," said Senate Finance Committee

Chairman Robert Dole (R-Kan.). "No one wins elections because they dreamed up a new tax," adds one Senate aide.

Dole and many others believe that an election year tax hike would require presidential initiative. President Reagan, on the other hand, remains committed to his "supply side" budget and tax cuts, and favors additional cuts in domestic spending and entitlement programs over future tax increases. And he continues to support increases in defense spending that will push the military budget from \$182 billion this year to \$325 billion in fiscal year 1986. But while the president pushed his tax and budget cuts through Congress last summer, he will have more difficulty convincing legislators to accept further destruction of social programs this year.

One warning signal came from 27 senators from industrial northeast and mid-western states, who balked at cutting more out of social programs in order to finance energy and defense spending that favors the South and West. The group, which included conservatives, wrote that "we cannot continue to support a budget that exacts such a heavy toll on the Northeast-Midwest region—an area of the country least fiscally capable of coping with reduced federal funds."

that taxes would increase in 1983 and 1984, leaving Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), co-author of the three-year Kemp-Roth tax cut, as the leading holdout.

Most observers agree that there will be no tax increase for 1982. Speculation centers instead on how revenues could be raised in 1983 and 1984. Congressional estimates show that doubling the so-called "sin tax" on alcohol, beer and cigarettes could produce \$5.4 billion in 1984. These excise taxes would further the traditional Republican goal of shifting the tax burden from income to consumption—on to low- and middle-income consumers, who spend a greater portion of their income on these goods than do wealthier people. While not offering any alternative, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) criticized the measure as "a most regressive consumer tax."

"My disappointment (with the excise tax proposal)," added House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Jones, "is once again the tax increase is aimed at middle- and lower-income people." As an alternative, Jones called for an "excise tax on luxury items," such as furs and jewelry. Congress repealed a tax on furs, jewelry, perfume and other luxuries in

would veto "with pleasure" any bill calling for a windfall profits tax. And while the Treasury might get \$180 to \$200 billion in added revenues, decontrol would cost consumers \$600 billion over the next three years. Experience with a windfall profits tax on oil suggests that such a measure could also be easily diluted by special exemptions.

The tax changes being examined by Finance Committee Chairman Dole also include a new minimum tax on corporations and individuals who use tax credits and deductions to avoid taxes. The current minimum raises \$1 to \$2 billion a year, a stronger tax might add \$10 billion.

Democrats have happily let Republicans bear the responsibility for the country's fiscal problems and the burden of developing a solution. "The question now is whether the president is wise enough—and tall enough—to concede that some of his policies were roughly conceived and in need of alteration. Or will he stubbornly cling to an economic theory that events are proving wrong?" said Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rostenkowski in a speech before the National Press Club.

Another question is will the Dem-



Leading Senate Republicans, including Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), Finance Committee Chairman Dole and Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), have all said that the budget process should now focus on tax increases and cuts in defense spending and entitlements. And congressional Republicans, who will soon face re-election on the president's economic program, were outraged by remarks by presidential advisor William Niskanen, who belittled the deficit, saying, "we should be prepared...to accept a deficit in the order of \$60 billion." Administration spokesmen quickly disavowed Niskanen's comments.

Reagan's top advisors were initially divided over a tax hike. One group, led by Budget Director David Stockman, advocated an increase as essential to prevent deficits of more than \$100 billion. But Treasury Secretary Donald Regan and administration supply-siders argued that any increase would dilute the stimulative impact of the president's \$750 billion tax cut. But in a TV appearance early this month Regan indicated

1965. Instituting a similar tax could produce \$500 million to \$1 billion a year, according to congressional estimates.

## Knocking out loopholes.

Administration officials are also weighing the elimination of some tax loopholes. The president's September proposals targeted tax-free industrial development bonds, which have financed the construction of K-Mart's, McDonald's and other commercial enterprises, energy tax credits and special tax breaks for insurance companies. In addition, the proposals would modify certain business accounting rules and the level at which the government taxes unemployment benefits, speed up corporate tax payments, and make it easier for the Internal Revenue Service to collect taxes.

Decontrol of natural gas, tied to what one Senate aide called a "temporary excise tax" could also raise significant new revenues, both on its own and by increasing corporate profits and hence tax payments. But during the height of last year's budget fight, Reagan promised Rep. Glenn English (D-Okla.) that he

ocrats, who failed to differentiate themselves during the budget and tax debate last summer, provide a compelling alternative to the administration's proposals this year. Thus far, many Democrats have focused on reducing the costs of last year's tax bill rather than developing their own ideas on taxes and tax reform.

"An enormous opportunity exists right now to restructure the federal tax system," Alice Rivlin told those gathered at the American Economics Association meeting. Reagan transformed the tax code once when he convinced Congress to accept a bill that shifts the tax burden from corporations to individuals and from the rich to low- and middle-income wage earners. Congress can respond to impending deficits by adopting consumption taxes that increase the burden on these taxpayers. Or it could eliminate tax expenditures and adopt a simple, progressive system that would enable it to lower everyone's tax burden and reduce the deficit. But nobody in a position of power in the House or Senate is advocating that alternative.

Ruth Simon is editor of *People & Taxes*.



# IN SHORT

## A spilt decision?

Briefs, exemptions, extensions, filings, appeals, a decision—and still no payment of one of the largest affirmative-action awards ever made. A year ago this month, Administrative Law Judge Rhea M. Burrow recommended that Harris Trust and Savings Bank, Chicago's third-largest bank, pay \$12.2 million in back wages to 1,800 women and minority employees who were victims of discriminatory hiring, pay and promotion policies. The ruling also raised the possibility of withdrawing millions of dollars in U.S. Treasury Department deposits and the bank's right to sell U.S. savings bonds. As expected, Harris Bank appealed to the secretary of labor, on whose desk the assembled briefs have languished since last August. The employees are still waiting for their cash.

It was in 1974 that Women Employed, a national organization based in Chicago, first filed a complaint with Treasury. The group charged that Harris Bank violated Executive Order 11246, which requires affirmative action by firms doing business with the federal government. According to Women Employed, the case marks the first time the government has sought to withdraw deposits from a bank because of discrimination, and the first time the government has sought back wages for an "affected class" of bank employees through administrative sanctions. On Jan. 11, 44 civil-rights, women's and labor organizations filed an amicus brief in support of the back-pay award.

"The secretary of labor would be hard put not to uphold Judge Burrow's decision," Women Employed executive director Day Piercy told "In Short." For that very reason, she predicts further delays in Washington.

## The unforeseeable present

On Jan. 9, reports Stella Ampuero, 65 Salvadoran soldiers showed up at Fort Bragg, N.C., for training in "hand-to-hand combat, use of light weapons and some artillery and basic infantry training." They will be followed, in February, by another 900 soldiers (600 junior officers will be trained at Fort Benning, Ga.). The Salvadorans' instruction, at a reported cost of \$15 million, is financed under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which authorizes the president to furnish military assistance to "any friendly country where an unforeseen emergency exists." During their 16 weeks under the tutelage of the Special Forces (a.k.a. Green Berets), the Salvadorans at Fort Bragg can reflect on the traditions of the place, including the ill-fated hostage rescue mission into Iran.

Upholding another tradition—Fort Bragg was the site of early-'70s protests against the war in Vietnam—about 250 demonstrators delivered a letter on Jan. 11 to the base's commander, Lt. Gen. Jack V. Nackmull. "The training of an entire battalion of a foreign army on U.S. soil," said the letter, "is without precedent and is clearly a marked escalation of U.S. intervention in the affairs of El Salvador."

## Bleeding-heart justices

The Social Security Administration, reports the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (via PNS), has warned its hearing judges that they may be targeted for special scrutiny if they rule too often in favor of people seeking disability benefits. Associate commissioner Louis Hayes says that any judge who rules against the government more than 74 percent of the time will be required to submit the cases for review. Judges found to be in error consistently will be disciplined. Hayes claims the action isn't intended to influence the way individual cases are decided, but one Seattle lawyer calls it "the worst abuse of judicial discretion you can possibly imagine." John Costello, who has specialized in disability cases for 25 years, says a comparable solution would be the Supreme Court telling a local judge he isn't finding enough people guilty.

## A farewell to arms

In case you were wondering, U.S. military aid to El Salvador for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 amounts to \$60 million—four times the total for the last three decades. In fact, argues a report from the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities (CEP), the Reagan years may see an expansion of foreign-arms sales to unprecedented levels. "We have moved," says William Hartung, the study's author, "from a severely flawed policy of arms-sales restraint under the Carter administration to a policy of open and active arms-sales promotion of almost any U.S. weapon to almost any nation."

CEP reports that countries lacking the financial resources to buy American arms will benefit from a new program of low-interest, direct U.S. government loans proposed for FY 1982. Less visible are a bunch of procedural and legislative changes aimed at simplifying future arms transfers. U.S. embassy personnel, for example, may now actively promote the sale of weapons. The Reagan administration is encouraging development of new weapons systems destined only for sale abroad. It has also proposed that more small-arms offers bypass congressional review and has asked for new funds to give the president more leeway in offering weapons for export.

—Josh Kornbluth



The Information Center lists resources like this slide show, *WHY AREN'T YOU SMILING?*

## The messages find the media

Until a few months ago, finding the right media for your meeting or the right audience for your media was pretty much catch-as-catch-can—you had to be on the right mailing lists. Film has been better served than other media (with, for instance, the book *Reel Change: A Guide to Social Issue Films*), but information seems to go out of date as soon as it gets easy to find—especially if you're not in area code 212. Now two services link up producers and users of social-interest media.

The Information Center, part of the Media Network in New York, is "a clearinghouse for information on film, videotapes and slide shows that deal with a wide spectrum of social issues." Set into motion by Marc Weiss, the Center has spent years compiling a comprehensive catalog system. It does more than tell you how to find a particular product. Researchers there will give you suggestions for programming on a particular issue. And they will put you in touch with people who are also in search of the media you need.

They helped Lynn Goldfarb, assistant educational director of the Service Employees International Union, when she put together a brochure for locals on labor films. The result has made more work for everybody, and they're delighted. "Response has been impressive," Goldfarb said. "We've one from no curiosity at all to calls almost every day. Locals also call me to find out if there's something new on a topic. One local, for instance, wanted media on ERA, and the Center knew about an almost-completed slide show in progress that we were able to schedule."

The Center also helped Goldfarb put together a film festival in conjunction with the Smith-

sonian Institution. "I slated films that were still in progress when I was planning the festival," she said.

There's a bonus for media makers in this, since requests for materials reveal what subjects and approaches are most needed. Black community organizer Angelica Smith, for instance, worked with the Center on voting-rights media. "We found out that information exists, but it's mostly from a long time ago," said Center coordinator Abigail Norman. "People need new material."

For its most ambitious recent project, on the topic of arms control and disarmament, the Center is collecting information both from written sources and from organizing groups. It will compile the resources and also publish a selected guide.

The service has been granted by foundations, churches and the government. Even so, only your first question is free. After that, it's a \$15-a-year membership for as many questions as you can dream up.

Another link-up service for media users is FILMNET, which sends out announcements of new video and film releases on any area of social concern. You just fill out a membership form indicating your interests.

The Information Center is at 208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011, (212)620-0878. For FILMNET, write CineInformation, 419 Park Av. S., NY, NY 10016, (212)686-9897.

—Pat Aufderheide

## Eatery has to eat its words

SAN FRANCISCO—This city has changed since Harry Bridges and his Longshoremen successfully battled the combined forces of shipping magnates and Pinkertons. The port is dead today, replaced by bayfront condomin-

iums, hotels and tourist haunts. San Francisco is a haven for corporate headquarters. The dockworkers have made way for clerical and service workers. And the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union is no longer the largest union in town. Today, that title belongs to the 17,000-strong Hotel, Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union Local 2.

Last month, Local 2 won the biggest union election in San Francisco in more than eight years. By an overwhelming 183-to-26 margin, employees at Maxwell's Plum—a lavish \$7 million restaurant in Ghiradelli Square, just a stone's throw from where Bridges led thousands of dockworkers on strike nearly five decades ago—voted to be represented in contract negotiations by Local 2.

Riding into San Francisco amid much fanfare last May, and on the successful coattails of its sister restaurant in New York City, Maxwell's refused to hold union-representation talks with Local 2. But the union was deluged with calls from workers who complained of broken promises and bad conditions: no holiday or sick pay, no overtime pay, favoritism, an inadequate medical plan and the lowest wages of any major restaurant in the city.

The 250 workers eligible to vote for or against unionization represented classifications ranging from cashier and dishwasher to captains, bartenders and cooks. According to Local 2 organizer Gary Guthman, more than 90 percent of the restaurant's Spanish-speaking and Filipino employees supported the union.

—Lavon Gieselman

Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o In These Times, 1509 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60622. Please include your address and phone number.



By Thomas Brom

SAN FRANCISCO

**T**O PREVENT A DISASTER IN THE financial market, the Reagan administration is quietly replacing Adam Smith's "invisible hand" with a much more tangible model.

Over the past six months, federal regulators have literally seized the shaky savings and loan industry, intent on easing the patient down slowly before it crashes to the pavement. A year ago the S&L crisis was about housing and interest rates. Now the tumbling thrifts are endangering finance capital itself.

"The situation is unprecedented," says savings and loan analyst Jerome Baron of Merrill Lynch in New York. "The magnitude of the crisis is the worst since the Great Depression—fully 25 percent of this industry is going down the tubes. The deficits are so huge that wholesale nationalization of the 'sickies' is now a possibility."

In 1981, the S&L industry as a whole lost an incredible \$5 billion—about the

ment policy is now the biggest contributor to its demise. Tight money at the Federal Reserve Bank contributes to high interest rates, which force the S&Ls to pay out more for new deposits. Meanwhile the thrifts are collecting low-interest housing payments on older home mortgages and eating the difference. That imbalance was made worse by the Depository Institutions Deregulation &

thrifts whose net worth was approaching zero—grew from 121 at the beginning of January 1981 to 263 at the end of May. By July 1, the list hit 404, or more than 10 percent of the savings and loans in the country.

Pratt decided to call a halt to the murmurs in the financial markets by stopping publication of the list. *The Wall Street Journal* persisted, getting the 404 figure

# IN THE NATION

## FINANCE

### Savings and loans totter at the brink



The heavy hand of regulation has been applied to S&Ls without a peep from industry trade groups or supply-side economists.

remaining balance left in the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation (FSLIC). The FSLIC insurance fund is the only government back-up to pay off depositors if the thrifts fail. Current industry figures indicate that nearly 200 S&Ls have assets that just cover liabilities, or zero net worth. About 300 more will have exhausted net worth within the year, and another 900 will see their net worth sink below 4 percent of liabilities—the minimum percentage considered healthy by S&L regulators.

"If the S&Ls go belly up, it's going to hurt all of us," says Mike Salkin, an economist for Bank of America in San Francisco. "The first priority of the regulators is to keep them solvent."

The Federal Home Loan Bank Board (FHLBB) and the FSLIC are now selling off the bottom quarter of the industry to any and all comers, offering tax sweeteners and the lure of interstate banking to attract buyers. The regulator's heavy hand—applied without a peep from industry trade groups or supply-side economists—is especially ironic in an administration otherwise committed to totally deregulating the store.

"These are trying times," says Carol Schatz, vice president of the California Savings and Loan League. "I haven't heard anyone complaining about government interference."

"What we're trying to do," adds Randall Pozdena, an economist for the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco, "is avoid a panic like the '30s, when the weak pulled down the strong."

Government policy set up the thrift industry during the New Deal, and govern-

Monetary Control Act of 1980, which gave investors high-yield options to putting money in a savings and loan. Although Congress has tried to help out the thrifts with adjustable rate mortgages, all-savers certificates and individual retirement accounts, it has been too little, too late for the weakest S&Ls in the East and Midwest.

Last October, the Reagan administration and Senator Jake Garn (R-Utah) each introduced bills that would shore up the strongest S&Ls while further deregulating the financial markets. The new laws would give S&Ls most of the powers of commercial banks, uphold "due-on-sale" clauses that virtually end mortgage assumptions and permit interstate mergers of commercial banks with S&Ls.

Garn had hoped to pass his bill before the close of the 1981 session, but quickly encountered a cat fight between banks, S&Ls and financial corporations over control of the emerging full-service consumer banking business. Debate will resume when Congress reconvenes Jan. 25, while the remaining S&Ls enter the zero net worth condition at the rate of one a day.

#### Shutting off the bad news.

Despite the record S&L deficits and the lengthening shadow of bank failures, the most amazing thing about the "panic of '81" is how well it is being managed. Bank Board chairman Richard Pratt and FSLIC director Brent Beesley grabbed control of the industry last summer, when it became apparent that continued high interest rates would decimate the S&Ls.

The Bank Board's "problem list"—

through a Freedom of Information request in November. So Pratt simply stopped counting, announcing that the "problem list" no longer existed.

That statement ended some unwanted publicity, but did nothing to allay fears on Wall Street. The Bank Board quietly made available a magnetic tape containing inside information on the 3,855 remaining thrifts, creating a safety valve for knowledgeable insiders. The tape is available to anyone for \$150, but the computer programs necessary to analyze it cost thousands of dollars.

#### Supervisory mergers.

The next step for Pratt and Beesley was to instill public confidence in the ability of the industry to deal with the crisis, all the while selling off the "sickies" as quickly as possible.

Pratt relied on broad regulatory powers that give the FHLBB a promotional function, much like the FAA's relationship with the airline industry. "The green light was already there," says Pozdena of the Federal Reserve. "Pratt and Beesley started doing things that would make the Fed blush."

The FHLBB began a behind-the-scenes campaign to sell off S&Ls before they could default, forcing the insurance fund to pay off depositors. Since last fall, Pratt and Beesley have put together 23 "supervisory mergers," including deals that make powerful interstate banks out of Home Savings and Loan, Glendale Savings and Loan and Citizens Savings and Loan. The Home Savings purchase was the first "basket" merger, combining a potentially lucra-

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tive Florida S&L with two weak Missouri thrifts in a classic case of horse trading. Beesley expects to make 200 mergers a year for the next several years, 90 percent of them without help from the insurance fund.

Among the inducements offered by the FHLBB is something called "purchase accounting"—a method of writing down mortgages to market value and then spreading out the losses over 40 years. Income from payments on the discounted loans, however, can be taken into earnings much quicker, producing paper profits from bad loans.

Baron says investors "won't be so stupid they'll be influenced by those numbers," and one analyst called the device "one of the most significant financial misrepresentations of the century."

The net effect of "purchase accounting" is that the Treasury provides extended tax breaks to the buyer, indirectly protecting the solvency of the FSLIC reserve fund.

#### Finance capital converges.

By far the biggest carrot the FHLBB—and Congress—has to offer prospective buyers is the promise of interstate consumer banking. In recent years bank holding companies have gotten around existing legislation by providing credit cards and corporate financial services from branch offices. Pratt and the Garn bill are now offering much wider entry, adding new luster to the hundreds of S&L neighborhood branches that could be combined.

The interstate banking attraction appears to be working—bigger rabbits have recently come to nibble at the S&Ls. Chase Manhattan Corporation is now in the market for a failing thrift, even though the FHLBB would prefer to keep mergers within its industry. National Steel Corporation owns S&Ls with 136 branches in three states. Sears, which recently bought Dean, Witter, Reynolds, now has a full range of financial services from insurance to savings.

"Sears is in great shape to put a bank or brokerage house in every small town in America," says Bank of America's Salkin. "The trouble is, I'm not sure all this consolidation can be done smoothly. There are going to be lots of brush fires to fight for some time. The regulators will be chasing from one corner to another for the next 10 years."

What is significant in all of this is both the desperation to prevent crisis in the financial market and the giddy exhilaration of the regulators who improvise solutions from day to day.

"The history of the American republic can be written as an attempt to get the financing right," comments Hyman Minsky, an economist at Washington University in St. Louis. "Capitalism's fundamental flaw is not that it engenders poverty, but that it ends up in depression. So even if you get the money right, it only lasts for a while."

Minsky says that two major aspects of the American economy have changed since the Great Depression: the size of government and the network of financial stabilizers. "What do these agencies stabilize?" he asks. "You can say it in one word, just like John Reed in *Reds* describing what World War I was about—profits."

Indeed, the financial doomsayers seem to be collected on Wall Street, where investors hang on every pessimistic word from Henry Kaufman, senior economist at the investment banking firm of Salomon Brothers. Kaufman has been the Reagan administration's nemesis from the start, predicting that increased defense spending will only result in higher interest rates. It is those high rates—currently 17 percent for home mortgages—that are killing the S&Ls.

Wall Street watches Henry Kaufman a lot closer than Ronald Reagan," says Pozdena of the Federal Reserve. "When Henry talks, people listen. There are not a lot of supply-siders left."

"If Henry is right, it could get real bad for the thrift industry," comments Baron of Merrill Lynch. "Congress would have to make a giant step in taking over a sector of the financial market. But there could be enough 'sickies' in the next few months to require it." ■





## IN THE WORLD

### POLAND

# Solidarity stretches its limits

By Diana Johnstone

P A R I S

**W**HAT DO PEOPLE MEAN when they say that Solidarity went too far? This has been explained in detail by Zbigniew Kowalewski, a Solidarity leader from Lodz, who happened to be in Paris on union business when the army shut down his country on Dec. 13.

Kowalewski told *Le Monde* that the most pressing concern in Lodz has been getting basic necessities to the people. The urban area of this major industrial center was threatened by famine when food distribution broke down. Looking into the problem, Solidarity discovered "absolutely scandalous disorder," Kowalewski said.

Officials couldn't say how many ration cards had been issued. The government reportedly handed out cards to favored citizens, and those cards were used over and over again.

Last October, Solidarity in Lodz demanded and got the right to print and control ration cards for the region. For the first time needs were calculated and cards were printed and distributed in a systematic way. Unfair privileges stopped and lines got shorter, Kowalewski said.

Lodz was an exception to the rule. The government refused Solidarity's demand to control food distribution nationwide. Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Rakowski said to Lech Walesa, "In this country, whoever controls food distribution holds power."

After getting control of food distribution, Lodz Solidarity started planning to take control of industrial production. Every independent economist in the country agreed that the Polish economy could not recover from its breakdown without getting rid of bureaucratic centralization—it was corrupt throughout, inefficient and without any system of checks. The government promised economic reform as of Jan. 1. But in November, the government retracted its promise and said the old system would be used

this year with additional centralization.

According to Kowalewski, the factory workers then concluded that they would have to carry out the necessary economic reform. A large majority of workers in the Lodz region were in favor then of an "active strike." Strike committees would take control of production and organize it according to a plan decided by the workers.

Kowalewski was the theorist of the active strike, defending the idea in articles and pamphlets. In the days leading up to the military coup, Kowalewski argued that by preparing for an active strike to safeguard the means of production, Solidarity displayed obvious moral superiority over a government unable to do anything but prepare for war against its own society.

The national Solidarity leadership was divided over the idea of an active strike, which "provoked panic in the state apparatus," according to Kowalewski. Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the party organ *Tribuna Ludu* and Central Committee Secretary Stesan Olszowski led

the campaign against the active strike. A majority of Lodz workers—about 65 percent are Solidarity members and in some big factories up to 85 percent belong to the union—were in favor of initiating what they realized was a revolutionary action.

The evening of Dec. 9—just four days before martial law was imposed and 12 days before the strike was scheduled—workers at a dozen different enterprises in Lodz agreed to strike and began recruiting and organizing guards to prevent sabotage of production. They also met with Solidarity representatives from neighboring regions to tell them Lodz would probably launch a large-scale active strike Dec. 21 and wanted their support, especially assurances that supply lines would not be cut. The Lodz regional chairman of Solidarity, bus driver Andrzej Slowik, was sent to Gdansk to seek authorization for the strike from the union's National Executive Committee, of which he was a leading member.

In August 1980, the 32-year-old Slowik had been elected chairman of the public transport workers strike committee, and went on to become the combative leader of an exceptionally radical region. According to Kowalewski, Slowik initially distrusted the three intellectuals on the nine-person regional presiding committee, but they all came to an agreement on the active strike project.

Slowik was a member of the national Solidarity committee that held negotiations with Deputy Minister Rakowski during last spring's crisis, which had been provoked by police arrests and beatings of Solidarity leaders in Bydgoszcz. In response, Solidarity had called for a na-

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tionwide general strike, and Slowik (like workers in Lodz) supported the action.

But Lech Wałęsa and the moderates prevailed, and Slowik denounced the compromise as a swindle. In an interview several months later, he said that none of his colleagues seemed conscious of the nature and methods of the adversaries they were up against, nor could they anticipate what was in store.

Until last August Slowik had belonged to the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP). The PUWP's 9th Congress had convinced him that the party was incurable and never could be anything but an instrument of bureaucratic rule. He quit in disgust. Like Slowik, many other members have reportedly resigned from the party since last summer.

After the Dec. 13 coup, Slowik escaped from Gdansk back to Lodz, where he was arrested while urging workers to strike. He has reportedly been sentenced by a military court to four-and-a-half years in prison.

Obviously, the Polish government's fundamental provocation was that it refused to govern. Nothing worked, and those in charge refused to do anything about it. In its efforts to negotiate, Solidarity encountered what seemed to be a power vacuum at the top and naturally, it felt sucked into it. When those who are supposed to run things can't or don't, those underneath decide to take over. That's a revolution.



The government allowed Solidarity to control food distribution in the city of Lodz, but not nationwide.

## ITALY



# Communist Party scraps Soviet model

By Diana Johnstone

P A R I S

**T**HE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) has formally taken leave of the "international Communist movement," judging it an "outdated idea." Military repression in Poland has proved that Eastern European societies based on the Soviet model are incapable of "democratic renewal."

In a 6,000-word statement published in the Dec. 30 issue of the party's newspaper, *Unità*, the PCI repeated the comments made just after the Dec. 13 coup by its secretary-general Enrico Berlinguer: an historic phase has come to an end since "the propulsive thrust originating in the October Revolution is exhausted."

The PCI declared its intention to play an "autonomous and positive role" in open debate with the Soviet and other Eastern European ruling parties, and to maintain "normal relations with all Communist parties in the same way as with every other Socialist, revolutionary and progressive force, without special or privileged ties with any, on the basis of absolute autonomy of thought and political action without ideological, political or organizational links."

The Italians expect the Kremlin to counterattack, perhaps by backing efforts to split the party at the base, where many workers are reluctant to abandon the mobilizing myth of "real-life socialism" in the East. The PCI leaders' clear condemnation of the Soviet system is necessary, but also courageous considering the trouble it seems sure to bring them.

Looking ahead, the PCI said the failures of the Communist movement and the inadequacies of social democracy made the search for a new "third course" all the more imperative. Humanity is facing tremendous new problems—including its own survival—that capitalism clearly cannot solve.

Most of the long statement—now being debated in local PCI meetings throughout Italy—was devoted to an analysis of what went wrong with the Soviet

bloc in general and Poland in particular. No spur of the moment switch, the analysis drew on years of study of Eastern European societies, notably at the party's Gramsci Institute.

The statement said Eastern European countries are regressing, undergoing "involutive processes, recurrent and dramatic crises that challenge the monolithic conception of power, the lack of representative institutions, the closed hierarchical relations within the 'socialist camp' and the idea of socialism as a model and not an historical process developing on a world scale in the most diverse ways." The Eastern countries are suffering from a "system which does not allow any real democratic participation either in production or in politics. All that ends up not only stifling freedom and creative energies, but also puts a brake on the economic, technological and cultural dynamism of those societies, feeding constant conflict between reformist impulses and authoritarian impulses."

The PCI said the Polish crisis that exploded in 1980 could not be attributed to "maneuvers of reactionary forces, hostile to socialism" (as Moscow claims), even though it obviously offered opportunities for subversion. Rather, the causes lay in "an economic policy...which did not correspond to real possibilities and which increased inequalities," but even more to a bureaucratic, corrupt, undemocratic political system that rigidly resisted change. The chance for change came in the "tumultuous eruption of the Polish working class onto the political stage" through the "birth and enormous growth of the Solidarity union," which replaced the old, discredited unions. Other forces pushing for change were the Polish Catholic Church and "intellectuals with rich democratic cultural traditions." What was needed, in the PCI analysis, was to give the workers "full total responsibility, along with all the fundamental components of Polish society, in a joint effort of reform and renewal." This required making the system democratic and pluralistic.

Efforts by party members to push the Polish United Workers Party in that direction were defeated by "dogmatism,

conservatism, inertia and vacillation," the PCI noted.

The Italian Communists stressed that the "negative attitude of the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries weighed heavily in this crisis." There were "grave pressures, undue interference." A "political and ideological campaign hammered away against the effort at renewal which had been undertaken by an important part of the PUWP, Solidarity and the Church. All that made it harder to isolate and defeat the various extremist tendencies, which appeared in both the Solidarity union and the party, heading for a showdown."

The PCI said that some "extremist demands" from Solidarity "going far beyond the country's economic and productive means" were the result of years of keeping workers and youth far outside politics. The root of all this, the PCI found, was the damage to Eastern Europe by the imposition of the "Soviet model" for the economy, "but especially for the political system." The PCI argued that this was not the inevitable result of the Yalta accords, since right after World War II, Communist leaders began to discuss the "original character the people's democracies were supposed to have."

But with the Cold War, the Soviet model was imposed on the "people's democracies." The PCI believes great hopes were raised by the 1956 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, but Khrushchev's "renewal process" got bogged down. One shortcoming, from the very start of the de-Stalinization begun at the 20th Congress, was that by "concentrating criticism on the so-called 'personality cult,' it did not succeed in getting down to basics in analyzing the structure of the Soviet political system." The PCI promised to carry forth such analysis.

The Italian Communist statement said that Soviet bloc faults could not be blamed on outside enemy pressures, encirclement, threats and Cold War. The blocs should not be considered changeless, immobile "ideological-military camps governed by big-power logic," nor should peaceful coexistence be a means of preserving blocs but rather of creating conditions that make them superfluous. "And peaceful coexistence itself cannot be merely the expression of a diplomatic relations and understandings between states but requires the active intervention of peoples and first of all, of a vast peace movement."

The PCI cautioned that criticism and condemnation, however sharp, should not get in the way of disarmament talks or be used to create a Cold War climate. This would not help the Polish in any way. Their chances of recovering some

democratic freedoms depend on the development of detente in Europe and the world.

The Dec. 30 document echoed a statement made by Romano Ledda criticizing Soviet power politics. The statement, adopted by the PCI's central committee last Oct. 5, said Moscow was partially responsible for the current international tension. It claimed Moscow used military force to try to expand its sphere of influence, neglected opportunities to work for peace after the American withdrawal from Vietnam and weakened the non-aligned movement. Ledda also criticized Moscow for exploiting third-world struggles for its own ends as a great power.

The "Soviet model" has long since lost whatever appeal it may have had. But some Communists in Italy and elsewhere still see the USSR as the only anti-imperialist power capable of preventing

## The PCI criticized the Kremlin. It expects Moscow to counterattack.



the U.S. from crushing liberation and revolutionary struggles around the world. The "last ditch" argument of the Soviet Union's only defender left in the PCI's leadership, Armando Cossutta, is that Soviet aid is necessary to third-world emancipation struggles.

The Dec. 30 statement said the PCI did not underestimate the USSR's world role, which "sometimes converges with the interests of countries and peoples fighting against imperialism and reactionary regimes for liberation and national independence, and sometimes goes against those same interests, when it does not openly violate them as in the case of the military intervention in Afghanistan."

The PCI repeated its longstanding call for a "new internationalism" between all revolutionary and progressive forces in the world. This is primarily a bid for cooperation with the parties of the Socialist International.

While social democracy appears "blocked" by the current economic crisis, the PCI noted with obvious approval that "from France to Greece, from Scandinavia to Germany, the search is on for new ideas and programs. The current crisis of capitalism requires, more than ever, that all the forces of the European working-class movements get to work on a new way to socialism."



# Revenge

It's one thing for a black to win an election in a small Southern town. It's another to use the power of the office.

# of th

By Sheila D. Collins

**T**HE PASSAGE OF THE VOTING Rights Act of 1965 did more than open up the political process for blacks in the Deep South. It created, at least for a brief moment, the possibility of political democracy for both blacks and whites. With thousands of new voters going to the polls for the first time in 100 years—voters who had not been in anyone's hip pocket—it was just possible that leaders could be elected who were genuinely interested in that ever-elusive constituent, "the common good."

The challenge of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to unseat the Mississippi regulars in 1964 provided the first test of this possibility. Despite the ultimate failure of that challenge, the Voting Rights Act was, in at least one respect, a revolution for blacks in the Deep South. Before the Act only 20,000 blacks were registered to vote in Mississippi. After it was passed, that number jumped to 320,000. Today, Mississippi has the largest number of black elected officials in the nation—300.

But black political power was not easily won, nor has it been safely consolidated. According to John Quincy Adams, head of the political science department at Millsaps College in Jackson, a black candidate in Mississippi still cannot expect to muster more than 5 percent of the white vote in any election. Adams maintains that to elect a black candidate there must be at least a 65 percent majority in the candidate's district.

Making it past this hurdle has been no guarantee of black political success. Blacks elected to public office have frequently had to carry out their duties under a barrage of harassment, ranging from no or negative publicity to unfounded criminal accusations, unnecessary audits, FBI surveillance, mysterious burglaries and career disrupting activities by intelligence agencies as documented in Mary R. Warner's *The Dilemma of Black Politics: A Report on Harassment of Black Elected Officials* (National Association of Human Rights Workers, 1977). By late 1978, attacks on black political figures had become so serious that the National Conference of Black Mayors called for a special meeting with the FBI in an attempt to get the Bureau to correct some of the abuses.

Since Reagan's election, racists have begun to recoup the losses they suffered in the wake of the civil rights movement. In cities such as Atlanta, Los Angeles and Detroit sizable black middle classes have managed to hold a measure of political, if not economic, power. But in the counties, small towns and moderate-sized cities of the Deep South, where in many cases poor blacks are in the majority or near majority, the Bull Conners are coming back.

In Wrightsville and Johnson County, Georgia blacks who have tried to vote or demonstrate for equal rights and services have been faced with official intimidation and violence led by local law enforcement officials, violence of the type encountered by civil rights demonstrators during the '60s. Mayor Richard Arrington, the first black to head the city of Birmingham, Ala., is currently under intense attack in the news media, the courts and from the white Fraternal Order of Police and County Personnel Board. In one of the saddest cases of the season, two older women of rural

Pickens County, Ala., Julia Wilder and Maggie Bozeman, have been sentenced to five and four years respectively in the state penitentiary for alleged "voter fraud" in connection with their efforts to get elderly black residents to vote. Arnett Lewis, Director of the United League of Holmes County, Miss., recently described the situation in rural Mississippi as a state of "civil war."

The stakes to the Deep South's white power structure, and its allies in the boardrooms in Texas, Southern California and the federal government are high. Just how high is exemplified in the story of Eddie James Carthan, the first black since Reconstruction to be elected mayor of a biracial town in the Mississippi Delta. Elected in 1977 on a reform platform, with a promise to serve "all of the people" of the town of Tchula, Miss., Eddie Carthan today finds himself embroiled in a Kafkaesque tangle of false charges, public disgrace and court convictions that could put him in jail for several years.



I first heard Eddie Carthan speak at a rally in Jackson, Miss., last spring, shortly after he had been convicted of assaulting a police officer and sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary. To hear Carthan speak about freedom, justice and the responsibilities of citizenship in the simple, eloquent manner characteristic of many rural southern blacks, was to feel once again, the spirit King evoked during the heyday of the civil rights movement. But Carthan—elected mayor at the age of 27—was a child when SNCC workers moved through the Deep South, living with the poor, registering people who had never been allowed to vote and conducting Freedom Schools for the children of poor black sharecroppers and farmers like Eddie James Carthan.

"I was only 12 or 13 at the time of the civil rights movement," Carthan recalled at the Jackson rally, "but I would drive my grandfather to meetings. I attended the Freedom Schools." He thought getting elected was one of the benefits of the civil rights movement. "I thought I could represent those who had come through slavery, knowing nothing about voting, about going to a motel, sitting in the front of the bus or eating in a restaurant."

His election as mayor of Tchula presented Carthan with just such a challenge. Like many a southern town, it is divided down the middle by railroad tracks that separate the manicured lawns and colonial style homes of the white minority from the roach-and-rat-infested dwellings of the blacks. Ruled for over a century by white planters and their political lackeys, Tchula's population—70 percent black—suffers an "official" unemployment rate of 30 percent. Two-thirds of the population is on welfare, 81 percent of the housing units are classified as "deteriorating" and 47 percent of all family dwellings lack some or all plumbing facilities. Holmes County, in which Tchula is located, is one of the 10 poorest counties in the nation. When Carthan took of-

fice there were no public recreational facilities. The town possessed but one tractor, an old fire engine and an inoperable squad car.

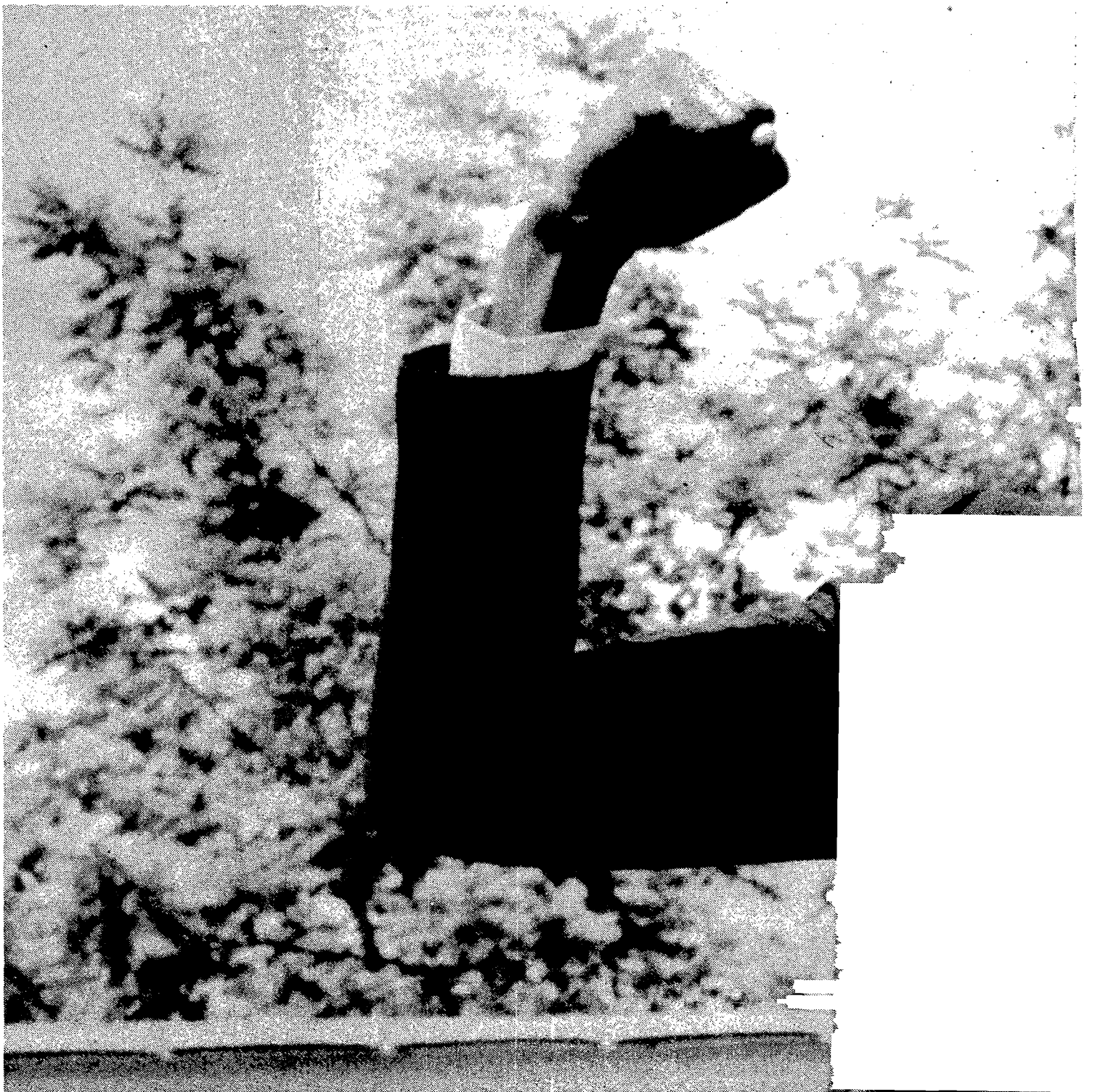
Mayor Carthan began to turn the town's grim statistics around. CETA programs employed local residents in weatherization programs, a housing rehabilitation program was undertaken and a child care program for welfare and working mothers was begun as was a nutrition program for the elderly and handicapped and a medical clinic. Two new squad cars provided 24-hour police protection, and a traffic and sign construction program was begun.

By the third year of his term Carthan had secured financial support for a new water system—which included plans to drain swamps to prevent flooding—and a mini-bus system. Plans were underway to construct public basketball and tennis courts, initiate door-to-door mail service, develop a cable TV system and construct a library. Three million dollars in federal and private monies were funneled into Tchula under Carthan's leadership.



By May 1981, however, the largely black town government (four black aldermen were swept into office with Carthan's election) had once more become almost

Eddie Carthan believed his election was proof of the gains won by the civil rights movement.





# e G O O l e B o y s

entirely white. Federal programs were cancelled, Carthan's reputation was in ruins and he had been sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary.

What went wrong? The white power structure of Holmes County would say that this is just another case of black incompetence. But others—national civil rights activists, religious leaders, black political figures and lawyers with the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Conference of Black Lawyers—see it another way. The only thing wrong with Carthan, they say is that he is black and tried to serve the poor black community that elected him.

In the late '70s, with a president in the White House who still owed a political debt to blacks, an enterprising local black politician could use the federal grants to bypass the local white power structure, bringing money and programs to the area. But as Carter's popularity began to wane, so did support for black political independence.

Carthan first demonstrated a spirit of independence when, shortly after his election, he was approached by a man claiming to represent the "four most powerful men in the state—more powerful even than the governor." He offered Carthan \$10,000 if the mayor would do things "the way they have always been done." The offer was made repeatedly; Carthan politely refused each time. To B.T. Taylor, president of the Holmes County Board of Supervisors and the "Mayor Daley" of the county, Carthan's election signalled a change in climate.

"Taylor would say that I 'wouldn't listen to him,'" Carthan said to *In These Times*. "What he really meant was that I wouldn't hire his son for this, his daughter for that, or give contracts to his pet companies. They even went on TV to say that they weren't going to let me run this town." Shortly after the bribe was refused, an FBI agent turned up at city hall, ostensibly looking for a missing criminal. The agent returned regularly once a week to sit in Mayor Carthan's office throughout his four-year tenure.

The trouble began in earnest about one year into Carthan's four-year term when one of the black aldermen resigned. A special election was held and Jason Gibson, also black, won. Shortly after this, he and another black alderman, Roosevelt Granderson, teamed up with the lone white alderman, John Edgar Hayes, and took control of the board.

The three sought legislation to limit the mayor's authority over fiscal and personnel matters. Armed with this legislation, they stopped payment on city employees' checks for two months in the summer of 1979, apparently in order to test their power, locked city hall for eight weeks and put police chief Sharkey Ford in front of the door with a shotgun with orders to "shoot anyone who tries to enter." That same summer the trio refused to pay the mayor's travel expenses for trips made on behalf of the town, and the Carthan family began to receive threatening letters and telephone calls.

Later they refused to pay telephone bills for the mayor's office, and then had the telephone removed. In December 1979 they reduced the mayor's salary

from \$600 to \$60 a month, and they increased property taxes on citizens who openly supported the mayor. There were forced resignations of blacks who were replaced by whites, including the appointment of an arch-racist as elections commissioner. By spring 1980 William Winter, a college roommate of white alderman Hayes, was occupying the governor's office and all federal programs to Tchula had been cut off.

The final blow for Carthan came in April 1980, when the police chief resigned. Carthan was empowered to appoint an interim chief until a formal meeting of the Board of Aldermen could be convened to elect a new one. Carthan chose Johnny Dale, a black policeman, as acting chief. During an aldermanic meeting before the appointment of a new police chief could be considered, Granderson, Gibson and Hayes allegedly stormed out of the building, went to a nearby store and called Jim Andrews (B.T. Taylor's brother-in-law), "appointing" him to take over as chief of police. At 11 p.m., Andrews took over the Police Department, dismissing acting chief Dale and changing the locks on the city hall door.

Carthan then took one of the two remaining loyal black alderman and five auxiliary policemen to city hall to tell Andrews he was acting illegally, since he had not been voted in nor sworn in, and was not bonded. According to Carthan and the auxiliary policemen who were later convicted in the case, Jim Andrews refused to leave and pulled a gun on the mayor and his deputies. A scuffle ensued and Andrews, outnumbered, was disarmed. Carthan immediately filed charges against Andrews. Later, however, Andrews and James Harris, a black off-duty policeman whom Andrews had ordered to come to city hall and who was detected during the scuffle by Carthan's men hiding out in a back room, pressed charges of aggravated assault on a police officer against Carthan. The state later dropped Andrews' charges, but brought Harris' to the grand jury.

The preliminary hearing was held in Dean Taylor's court. Carthan's charges against Andrews by this time had mysteriously disappeared. When Carthan's lawyer asked why Carthan's charges against Andrews were not heard, the D.A. said that Andrews was now immune, since he had already testified before the grand jury against Carthan and his deputies.

Two months before his term of office was to expire, Carthan and his six co-defendants were convicted of assaulting a police officer. The judge had refused to allow instructions to the jury as to the mayor's legal authority in handling police appointments. In addition, the defense team discovered notes in the jury room indicating that the jury had voted 11-to-1 for a conviction of simple assault—a misdemeanor. When the verdict was read to the court, however, the conviction had been changed to "simple assault of a police officer"—a felony. In Mississippi a jury is not allowed to impeach its verdict once it has been delivered to the court.

James Harris, the unlettered black man whose testimony convicted the Tchula Seven, was immediately hired to work in the store owned by Andrews and appeared a short time later with a new car. Several months after the conviction, however, Harris appeared on TV to recant his story.

Five months after the first conviction, Carthan was convicted on the first of several federal charges pending against him. This one was for fraud in connection with

the purchase of equipment for a day care center he oversaw as mayor. Though the circumstances would appear to exonerate Carthan (one of the other defendants admitted to having forged Carthan's name on a fictitious equipment delivery receipt), Carthan worries that his assault conviction paved the way for future indictments and convictions on federal charges connected with his activities as mayor. The prosecutor for the Justice Department had earlier told Carthan's lawyer that Carthan was one of three men in the state of Mississippi they were out to get—the other two being former governor Cliff Finch and Charles Evers.

Carthan's supporters believe that a plea bargaining deal was worked out between the men who were really guilty of defrauding the federal government and the Justice Department. Before the trial began Carthan was offered a chance to plea bargain if he would produce evidence that would enable the state to go after former governor Finch and Charles Evers. Carthan politely refused this deal as well.

During the time that he was being threatened and publicly vilified, Carthan was compiling data on the decades-long corruption within the county's white elite. Fraud, bribery, kickbacks, the diversion of public funds into private uses appeared to be "the way things had always been done." In trying to find a lawyer Eddie discovered that there wasn't a single person in the entire state who would dare to touch the evidence he had compiled.

Carthan is currently out on bond pending the appeal of both cases. The federal prosecutor told Eddie's lawyer that if they don't get him on one charge they will get him on others. A few days before Christmas the offices of the *Jackson Advocate*, a paper that has long supported independent black political candidates and gave positive publicity to Carthan when every other local paper had already convicted him in print, was firebombed. The Jackson police have not responded.

To southern blacks the parallels between 1981 and 1877 are painfully clear. The backlash against Reconstruction embodied in the Hayes-Tilden Compromise was more than a return to politics by color. It was a declaration that the class relationships upon which the country had been founded were not to be disturbed.

Black enfranchisement signalled a redistribution of the country's wealth and resources. The backlash against black politicians in the 1870s came down heaviest on the most visionary black leaders—those who expressed the aspirations of the masses, rather than the caution and compromise of those who had something to lose.

The powerful have always been able to find their overseers, their Uncle Toms and Aunt James. It is folks like Eddie Carthan who give those in power nightmares.

*Sheila D. Collins is an educator and social activist who works through the United Methodist Church. The address of the National Campaign to Free Mayor Eddie James Carthan and to Preserve Black Political Rights is: P.O. Box 29, Tchula, MS 39169.*



Sheila Collins



# LETTERS

*IN THESE TIMES* is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

## BIOLOGY

THE TROUBLE WITH KATE ELLIS (*ITT*, Dec. 9) and others who have written about "families" in *In These Times* is that they prefer their torturous ideological abstractions to some basic biology. All the major primates mate and live in some sort of family situation with a system of loyalties and obligations. Is that so hard for the leftist/feminist ideologues to deal with? No wonder we can't organize well enough to pass ERA and other basic legislation. We used to warn about pie-in-the-sky; the new warning should be about ideology in the sky.

-D. Jordan  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

## FACADE

MICHAEL PARENTI HAS DEMONSTRATED that business leaders have always known that "supply-side" theory is economic nonsense (*ITT*, Dec. 16). For them the theory is a facade to cover the further massive enrichment of the wealth at the expense of the poor, and to dismantle social programs, an objective since New Deal days.

The projection of vast budget deficits demonstrates that administration spokesmen do not take their supply-side propaganda seriously. The vast tax cuts for business and the wealthy were supposed to spur investment, expand the economy and hence increase the total tax take to the point of balancing the budget. Yet even before the cuts could begin to take effect, we're told there will be no such tax bonanza—which means, of course, no such business expansion.

During the 1980 campaign, Reagan told a *Time* magazine writer that in the late '40s the size of his tax bite on \$130,000 earned one year transformed him from a New Deal liberal to a conservative. He determined to devote himself to wiping out such injustice. No nonsense about the money being needed to spur investment—just plain desire to hold on to his pile!

Since a politician cannot campaign on a platform of rich man's greed, camouflage is necessary, and supply-side propaganda provides it. As we now know, neither businessmen nor economists nor administration "influentials" take supply-side theory seriously, it still dominates government economic policy. The goal, after all, is still further massive shifts of resources from the poor to the rich and the dismantling of social programs.

-Max Gordon  
New York City

## DOUBLE STANDARD

WHEN MARTIAL LAW WAS IMPOSED by a U.S.-backed dictatorship on 50 million Filipinos in September 1972 few in this country knew about it, and no one seemed to care. In contrast, martial law in Poland has become an instant *cause celebre*.

Up to now, strikes are outlawed and independent unions banned in the Philippines. The May First Movement, local counterpart to Solidarity, spearheads the growing resistance, but scarcely anyone, least of all the AFL-CIO, shows interest in the plight of millions of Filipino workers.

The Reagan administration unblushingly acclaims the dictator Marcos as a model democrat despite 70,000 political prisoners held since 1972 and several hundreds killed. Because Washington supports Marcos with \$200 million tax dollars annually, the American public

can more effectively demand from the Marcos regime guarantees to protect workers' rights—more urgently, restore the civil liberties of 50 million Filipinos—than it can pressure Warsaw and Moscow to relent. But why is there no widespread clamor for freedom and justice in the Philippines?

Because of public apathy and official callousness to the brutalities of the U.S.-supported Marcos regime, millions of Filipinos are now beginning to see that those responsible for the loss of their freedoms and their misery are not the Soviet Union or communists anywhere, but those in Washington who loudly decry tyranny in Poland but not in third world countries where American business and military interests predominate.

-Prof. E. San Juan, Jr.  
University of Connecticut, Storrs

## INNOCENCE

TAMAR JACOBY (*ITT*, Dec. 16) SEEMS to have misread Jane Alpert's moving autobiography. Alpert's beautifully written book shows how love for a quite disturbed man led her to engage in acts that were potentially dangerous to innocent people and that served to justify reactionaries. It's good to see that someone can outgrow that kind of foolishness and help others distinguish between romantic craziness and serious political activity.

-David Hadas  
St. Louis

## VOTING RIGHTS

AT LAST, SOME COVERAGE OF THE voting rights act. Thanks for John Judis' article (*ITT*, Dec. 16). Please keep up the reporting on this vitally important piece of legislation. In the past I've been disappointed by your neglect of this bill. I hope you will continue your coverage.

-Neil Irvin Painter  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

## IF YOU CAN'T BE SAFE...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR UP-TO-DATE coverage of nuclear issues in "In Short" (*ITT*, Dec. 23). However, one item was short-changed—that Tennessee had decided to distribute potassium iodide (abbreviated KI) pills to all those living within five miles of the Sequoyah nuclear plant in Daisy.

First, thyroid gland exposure to radioactive iodine, one of many possible isotopes that would be released in a nuclear accident, has been conclusively linked to thyroid nodules and cancer. KI is more than 90 percent effective in blocking the thyroid gland's absorption of radioactive iodine. It is inexpensive and has few negative side effects. KI is not a panacea. It only blocks against the uptake of radioactive iodine. Yet radioactive iodine is thought to be the most prevalent isotope to be released in most postulated accidents. The article joked that distribution of the drug was "[to] avoid the inconvenience of evacuation." This is not true: In some accident scenarios it would be more dangerous to evacuate than to stay indoors and take KI. Significant doses of radioactive iodine can travel hundreds of miles from a plant, yet Tennessee is only distributing KI to those living within five miles, an arbitrary distance from the standpoint of public health and safety.

The political issue is whether emergency planning placates people or wakes them up to the danger of nuclear power.

Some activists have viewed it as a "liberal" issue that doesn't cut deeply enough. The nuclear industry thinks differently. It sees its biggest public relations problem as addressing public concerns about emergency precautions. My own work in this area confirms that—many people, previously unmoved, become upset after looking at plans for their area, or the lack thereof. Indeed, the biggest reason utilities are not required to supply of stockpile KI is that the nuclear industry feels it would be bad PR. When confronted with the possibility that they might have to swallow a pill because of where they live in relation to a nuke most people will realize that they are being asked to swallow a lot of BS about nuclear safety too!

Another issue which deserves attention is who is to pay for emergency planning measures like KI. In Tennessee the state, i.e., taxpayers, are footing the bill. This is just another handout to the profit-hungry industry. As long as reactors continue to threaten the public, their owners should pay the costs of the limited safety precautions that can be taken.

-Richard Udell  
Critical Mass Energy Project  
Washington

## UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

STEVE ASKIN'S ARTICLE ON SOUTH-Sern Catholics (*ITT*, Dec. 23) contains a photo and several quotes of Father Vincent O'Connell of the Catholic Committee of the South. But it fails to mention that O'Connell played a large role in the redbaiting of progressive unions in the South Louisiana area during the '40s and '50s. Two years ago I interviewed O'Connell while researching the history of the ILWU in New Orleans. He was proud of his agitation for the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, an anti-communist group that did much of Phil Murray's dirty work in the CIO's post-war purges.

On one occasion, O'Connell showed up at a meeting of the Fur and Leather Workers, who were trying to organize Cajun trappers and fishermen near Grand Isle, La. O'Connell succeeded in disrupting the meeting by going around the room pointing fingers at "reds" and "commies." Cajuns never got a union in that area; the ILWU was subsequently destroyed in Louisiana following a series of McCarthy-era witch hunts. O'Connell still feels justified in his actions, though they contributed to weakening union movements and struggles for racial justice in the South at that time.

-David Wells  
New Orleans

## SLOPPY!

WE DON'T EXPECT SLOPPY REPORTING when we pick up *In These Times*. However, the article on The Women's Crusade by Susan Williams (*ITT*, Dec. 23) has a glaring mistake that could easily have been avoided had I been interviewed. In her review of the history of Women Strike for Peace, with which I was proudly associated for many years, she states that I met clandestinely with women from Vietnam in Djakarta in 1965. I have never been to Djakarta and have never held a clandestine meeting. I have met with Vietnamese women during the course of the war years in Paris and in Vietnam. That meeting was not among them. I hope this mistake is not an indication of our need to scrutinize other *ITT* articles for sloppy reporting.

-Cora Weiss  
New York

## GETTING IT STRAIGHT

YOUR DEC. 23 ISSUE WAS A TOUR DE force, highlighted by Charles Sugnet's critique of "The Shakespeare Plays." The best of bourgeois cultural criticism has long recognized the historical specificity of cultural works. But the attempt to sanitize culture is always there. It has long amazed me how many critics could write about *Othello* as a

play about jealousy and ignore racism. Shortly after the dismal *Othello* of PBS and its corporate sponsors and apologists, Chicago was treated to James Earl Jones' performance at the Schubert Theatre (unfortunately at ticket prices that made it inaccessible to most of the people in this city trying to survive in Year One of Reagan). The two interpretations should be played side-by-side and studied, but unfortunately the PBS version is now "definitive," while Jones' production is gone. I doubt that *Othello* has been done as well since Paul Robeson broke Broadway records nearly 40 years ago. The less said about the "definitive" PBS version, the better.

Pat Aufderheide's viewing of *Reds* is equally important. While it's still too early to say whether Warren Beatty has softened an emerging generation up for a socialist pitch, it's heartening to see audiences this Christmas lulled by the "Internationale." And it took some humor to use that old favorite as background music to a tastefully-done love scene. Aufderheide's review points to the woeful inadequacy of Chicago's movie criticism, such as it is. Not only are your facts straight (as opposed to Gene Siskel's, who manages once again to revive the "International Workers of the World," a redundancy that neither Beatty nor the Wobblies would have tolerated), but those who worked on the movie off-screen are given the artistic credit they deserve.

-George N. Schmidt  
Chicago

## IN AND OUT

IN HER REVIEW OF *REDS* (*ITT*, Dec. 23) Pat Aufderheide notes that Warren Beatty had been looking into the Reed story for 15 years and Griffith for five. So why do they depict Reed landing in a jail in Finland leaving Russia when instead he got there while trying to get into Russia? Indicted for sedition here, he left the U.S. late in 1919 as a stoker, with false papers, and worked his way to the port of Abo in Finland. He was arrested there under the name used on those papers, charged with smuggling, and held for roughly three months. He was then exchanged, under that false name, for Finnish prisoners held in Russia. At that time labor in Finland had been crushed by Mannerheim's white guards. As a result of that exchange, as Bates puts it in his item on Reed in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: "He was making speeches in Moscow while the American government was still conducting a nationwide search for him." Other data confirm that account. What purpose is to be served by making Reed's prison stay on his way out of Russia?

-Fred Thompson  
Chicago

## A DIFFERENT KIND

I WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO YOUR WEEKLY for a year. I was an active member of a leftist party during Franco's dictatorship and afterward. I was put into prison twice and had lots of troubles. Presently, I'm not engaged in organized political activities and consider myself a radical independent.

Some American friends sent me copies of your weekly and I was surprised by the high quality of your issues and the honest of your news. I was used to a very different kind of American press! So please accept a Spaniard's congratulations.

I'm currently teaching translation and American Civilization at the University of Granada and I'm certain your materials will be most useful for my classes.

-Roberto Mayoral  
Granada, Spain

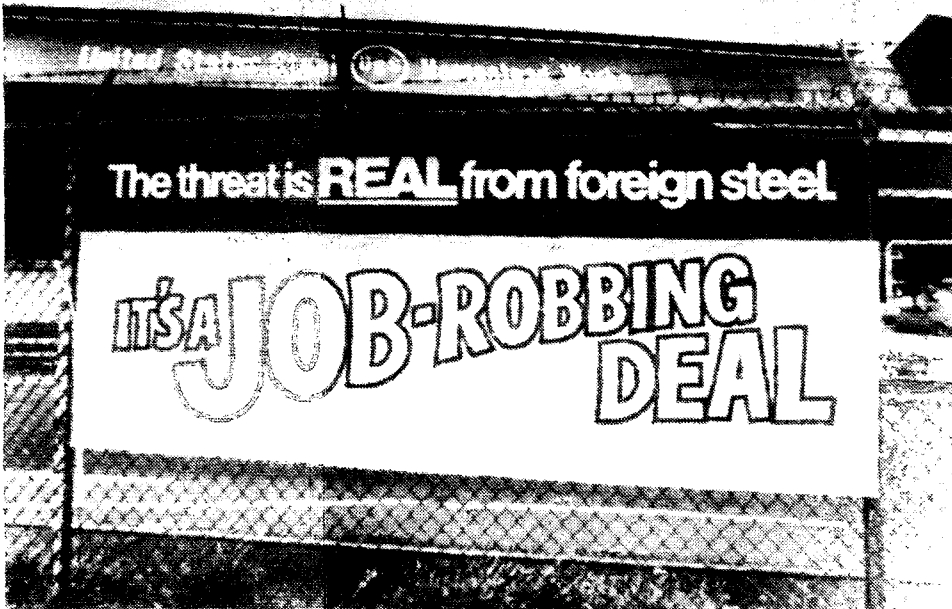
*In These Times* circulation for the week of January 20, with comparative figures for one year ago:

	Week of Jan. 20	One year ago
Subscriptions	23,370	18,348
Bulk	2,100	1,782
TOTAL	25,470	20,130



# PERSPECTIVES

## U.S. Steel cons the Congress and union



By James Balanoff

**T**HE NEWS IN LATE NOVEMBER that U.S. Steel Corporation had offered to buy Marathon Oil Corporation astonished steel union officials, and some members of Congress who had done their bidding by launching a vigorous campaign for tax breaks, pollution abatement postponement and tighter trade laws to protect the "troubled" steel companies and provide them with sufficient capital to revitalize the lagging industry.

The real shame of it all is not that greedy tycoons lied one more time, but that so many well meaning, intelligent American leaders were gullible enough to believe them after all these years.

In 1907 U.S. Steel's Elbert Gary and Henry C. Frick conned President Theodore Roosevelt into approving their purchase of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, which a Senate investigating committee later declared to be a clear violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. How did they do it? They told the President that the company in question was failing, that it had very little value to them but they were willing to buy it as a public service to prevent the spread of panic in a "troubled" industry. In reality the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company was thriving and was of enormous value to U.S. Steel in completing its vertical integration.

When some U.S. Steel stockholders began to express concern for the well-being of those steel workers working a twelve-hour shift, seven-day week in 1912 (about a third of the total work force), Elbert Gary brought workers to stockholders' meetings to assure them that the work was easy and they had no complaints. No one noticed that the workers he brought were all working eight-hour shifts at the lightest jobs in the industry.

Following the defeat of the 1919 Steel Strike, an investigative team sponsored by a group of churches made shocking revelations about working conditions in the industry. President Harding applied personal pressure on management to eliminate the 12-hour shifts. They complied reluctantly, stalling for several years and telling the president that a labor shortage made it impossible to comply immediately. In reality the black churches of Gary, Indiana, were stretching themselves to the limit to feed hundreds of stranded black workers U.S. Steel had brought in from other states as unknowing strikebreakers and then dumped on the streets when the strike was broken.

The time-honored practice of deceiv-

ing the public, the government and its workers is still relied upon by the steel industry. U.S. Steel and most of the other steel corporations have allowed some of their plants to deteriorate badly while plowing their money into other more lucrative businesses. The Basic Oxygen Furnace, invented in 1950, was not adopted in the U.S. for almost a decade. Even today 15 percent of the steel in this country is produced by the old-fashioned open hearth method. Japan has no such outmoded furnaces. More than half of Japan's steel is converted into semi-finished forms by continuous casting without going through the ingot state, but less than 20 percent of American steel is processed in this more efficient fashion.

Our steel industry has not remained competitive with foreign steel companies, but not for the reasons they claim. Their game plan, the outlines of which have been clear to any knowledgeable observer for many years, has been to run a certain percentage of their American plants into the ground, cutting wages wherever possible, avoiding pollution controls as long as possible and bleeding these plants and these communities as much as possible in order to finance expansion elsewhere and diversification. Youngstown, Ohio, provides a perfect example of this, with thousands of jobs lost forever and a city laid to waste.

Nearly a third of U.S. Steel Corporation's sales already come from non-steel operations; 40 percent of Armco's revenues are from non-steel products and they have dropped the word "steel" from their company name. American steel companies have been investing heavily in petro-chemicals, natural gas and natural resources all over the world since the mid-'60s. Much of their investment in steel has been in foreign operations. Armco has built mills in Argentina; U.S. Steel has built mills in Brazil and Colombia and supervised construction of an integrated steelworks in Taiwan.

American banks, closely tied to the steel industry, have also been helping foreign steel companies to modernize. Morgan Guarantee Trust, a major stockholder in U.S. Steel, has loaned \$137 million to Japanese steelmakers. Chase Manhattan Bank, which foreclosed on Wisconsin Steel, putting 4,000 American steelworkers out of their jobs, is the nation's second most active lender to Japanese Steel.

While failing to modernize American steel plants and aiding their foreign competitors, American steel companies have stalled on pollution controls for the entire industry, complaining that the rules were too tough and profits too low and that pollution controls made them non-competitive. Approximately one-fifth of all

industrial air pollution in the United States comes from the steel industry, twice as much as from any other single industry, yet all through the '70s American steel companies spent only about 12 percent of their investment capital on pollution control equipment while their major foreign competitor, Japan, spent 16 percent.

Worst of all, the steelworkers union and several well-meaning congressmen from steel-producing areas have been enlisted to pressure the government for relief from compliance with badly needed pollution controls, for tax breaks and for added protection against foreign steel competition. These political and union leaders have consistently accepted the companies' position on these issues without serious questioning. Those who raised questions from the ranks of the union were regarded as "trouble-makers," dissidents who were told they "were not privy to certain information."

The union has participated in joint industry-labor productivity committees, urging workers to work harder in order to save jobs, even though industry failure to modernize technology is the major productivity problem. They have encouraged union members to accept and believe in a theory of "mutual trusteeship," when it should be obvious that they're dealing with a group of conglomerates who are out to own the world. They have watched these corporations raise their chairmen's salaries 13 to 17 percent during years of massive lay-offs, watched them keep their dividends high while threatening to move or go out of business unless unions gave them more concessions.

All of this has been raised by me and a few others at USWA Executive Board meetings and with area politicians. But the myth that large corporations are socially responsible and patriotic is still widely accepted in the face of abundant evidence to the contrary. USWA President McBride did state, in the wake of the news about Marathon, that the steel corporations have "very definite obligations to the nation and its people, and to its employees." But he reiterated his faith that the company would use oil profits to help their steel industry and expressed concern mainly about the damage to company credibility in the eyes of the workers.

U.S. Steel, in its current efforts to acquire Marathon Oil, will contribute to inflation by paying inflated prices for Marathon stock. They offered \$6.6 billion or \$125 a share to counteract Mobil's first offer of \$5.1 billion or \$85 a share. More important, their policy of planned disinvestment in American steel is against our national interest and could eventually leave the nation without a strong basic steel industry.

Despite blind faith in corporate inte-

grity and lack of leadership from top USWA officials in the current steel crisis, lower echelon union leaders are beginning to act on their own. Local 1397 at U.S. Steel's Homestead Works, headed by Ron Weisen, is seeking, through a U.S. federal court, to force U.S. Steel Corporation to produce its capital spending plans for its plants in Western Pennsylvania. U.S. Steel has asked for a three-year delay in meeting EPA requirements for its plants in the Monongahela Valley. A bill passed by Congress in 1981 would permit such a delay if the money saved by delaying pollution control is spent on modernization. Local 1397 wants to see a blueprint of their plans in advance. And the court suit has been joined by President Alice Peurala of Local 65, five Pennsylvania steelworkers, two advocacy groups and three other USWA locals, Local 1397 and Local 4889 in Pennsylvania and Local 1938 on the iron ore range in Minnesota.

This attitude of healthy skepticism should be adopted by our leaders, both



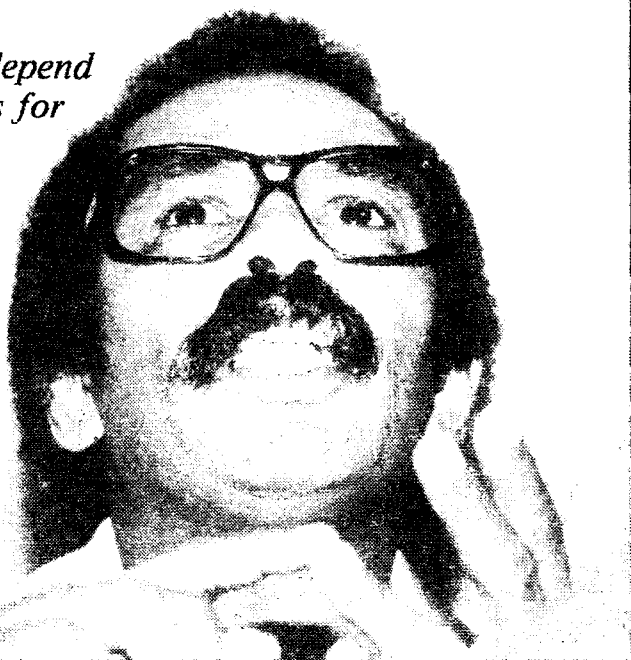
The author has been a steelworker and unionist for many years.

in Congress and in the Steelworkers Union. Until we learn once and for all that large corporations and conglomerates are only as socially responsible as they are compelled to be, we will continue to be conned—again and again and again and again!

**James Balanoff** is former Director of District 31, United Steelworkers of America, in Illinois and Indiana.

*"I have come to depend on In These Times for its coverage of the news that affects the working class, the disadvantaged, and minorities and its perspective that reflects their needs and concerns."*

**John Conyers**  
Member of Congress  
1st Dist., Michigan



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## INPRINT

## CITIES

# The myth and realities of urban crisis

**The Permanent Government:  
Who Really Runs New York?**  
By Jack Newfield  
and Paul Du Brul  
Pilgrim, 132 W. 31st St., N.Y.,  
NY 10001, 304 pp., \$9.95

By Ruth Messinger

This is an important book, not just for New Yorkers, but for anyone who cares about the survival of urban America. Newfield and Du Brul have brought Lincoln Steffens up-to-date. They provide an essential primer for dissecting every major city's "permanent government"—often invisible, unelected, unaccountable and pervasively powerful.

Taking a broad 25-year slice of New York history, the authors detail the intricate interrelationship between the major banks, landlords and developers, politicians and their machines. They show how the resources of the richest city in the nation have been systematically siphoned into windfall subsidies for Manhattan buildings while essential services have collapsed and once-solid neighborhoods have crumbled. They examine "legal graft"—the currency of the "permanent government" that provides a cornucopia of benefits to those who hire the right lawyers, architects, publicists and corrupt union heads. They name names, cite dates and even give addresses—a model of committed muckraking.

But this book is much more than just a guide to urban corruption. While abjuring simplistic plot theories, the authors make a convincing case that New York's "fiscal crisis" in 1975 and the subsequent takeover of the city (and state) government by its business interests provided a testing ground for both the rhetoric and policies now being deployed at the national level by the corporate right. Men like William Simon and Felix Rohatyn played major roles in stage-managing New York's "crisis." They projected massive cuts in public services and employment while demanding tax incentives for private investment as the only source of recovery for the city. After you've read *The Permanent*

*New York's  
1975 "fiscal  
crisis" was  
really an old-  
fashioned  
bank panic.*

*Government*, you'll know why everything Ronald Reagan says sounds so familiar.

More importantly, you'll discover that the original New York City "crisis" was nothing more than an old-fashioned bank panic, and that when America's biggest banks began secretly dumping New York's notes on the shaky municipal bond market at the height of the '74-'75 depression, they unleashed a national tremor that ultimately cost every American man, woman and child \$14. When Newfield and Du Brul first broke this story, they were ignored by the press and the politicians. A year later, a report by the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission confirmed their disclosures, almost to the decimal point. But by then it was too late to scotch the myth of New York's "liberal self-destruction" or to roll back the counter-revolution taking place in public services.

## Censorship by lawsuit.

This book was first released in 1977 under the title *The Abuse of Power*. It sold well and moved into a paper edition. But when it was hit with \$8 million in libel suits, the publisher panicked and took it out of print. The authors won the libel suits but almost lost their book.

They thoroughly revised and updated the original manuscript, adding about 30 percent new material including a significant new section on the Koch administration, and finally found a new publisher in feisty little Pilgrim Press, a religious-oriented house that has recently brought out a number of titles relating to labor history, workers' culture and social problems.



Once-solid neighborhoods are crumbling as New York's resources are redirected by landlords and bankers.

Little of any value has been written about America's cities in recent years. We either get irrelevant rehashes of Civics 101 from liberal scholars, or elaborate theories of inevitable collapse by radicals who abuse figures issued by the banks and government agencies for their own ends.

That's what makes *The Permanent Government* so valuable, especially for college courses or worker education projects. It is written in clear, exciting prose that makes the reader care about an epidemic of arson or Mafia control of whole industries, while showing how these realities relate to a much larger economic and political structure. Its chapters—on the demise of the local labor movement, 80 years of mismanagement and regulatory favoritism for Con Edison, the political economy of organized crime—are small gems.

The reader can proceed easily from these analyses of New York to a better understanding of how their own permanent governments work. The chapter on remedies, too, should have relevance far beyond the shores of the Hudson. And finally, journalism schools should use the book to show prospective reporters how to convey complicated subjects to rank and file readers.

Ruth Messinger is a progressive Democratic member of the New York City Council and a member of the Board of Directors of the National League of Cities.

## IDEOLOGY

# You call dis informed?

**Target America: The Influence of Communist Propaganda on U.S. Media**

By James L. Tyson  
Regnery-Gateway, 284 pp.,  
\$12.95

By Dave Roediger

In his recent acceptance of an award from the American Legion, Ted Turner, yachtsman, cable TV executive and owner of the Atlanta Braves, suggested that the media and film industry be "put on trial" for lack of patriotism and for anti-business biases. The prosecutors are standing in line.

The onslaught began with the publication of *The Spike*, a novel by the rightwing journalists Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, last year. Borchgrave and Moss traced the activities of the fictional Institute for Progressive Reform, modeled on the Institute for Policy Studies, in acting as an influen-

tial "Soviet disinformation front," managing American news. Anti-IPS articles, including one in the *New York Times Magazine*, hinting at widespread and sinister influence on the press, multiplied. In recent weeks, Joseph Sobran, whose *National Review* column ought to be required reading for those who laud that magazine as honest and articulate, has bared the pink prejudices of newsmen Dan Rather, Tom Pette and Bill Moyers in an hysterical article. Joshua Murachik and John Haynes sound a similar note in "CBS vs. Defense" (*Commentary*, Sept. 1981) with a sustained and empty attack on Rather's June documentary on the military.

It would be hard to write a book on subversive influence on the media too flimsy and far-fetched for contemporary conservatives. But James Tyson has done it. Chilton Williamson Jr., reviewing *Target America* for *National Review*, can only wriggle. It is, he says, "a poor book worth reading."

He is half right. *Target America* is an exceedingly poor book. Like most of the writing on disinformation, it is inept and dishonest. Tyson promises to show that "implementation [of Communist policy] has been carried out by agents and sympathizers within the U.S., mainly American citizens, working in think tanks, citizen's committees and foundations, and helped by their friends in media and government." Using the inducements

of "Idealism, Ambition, Money, Sex, Alcohol and Blackmail," the Soviets have recruited a "Far Left Lobby" that successfully pressures the American media to follow "basic Kremlin goals" on issues like Vietnam, Cambodia, the CIA and the neutron bomb. In the entire book there is one solid example of such direct Communist influence on U.S. journalism. It's a shocker. Tyson reveals that the editors of the *Call*, organ of the tiny, openly pro-Peking Communist Party (M-L), support Chinese Communist foreign policy.

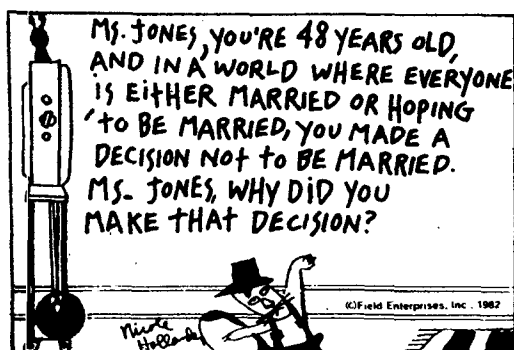
## Fancy zig-zag.

As *Target America* proceeds, Tyson's real argument becomes clear. "There are Communists under the bed," he says, quoting Eldridge Cleaver and then continuing with his own words, "but it is not necessary to prove that specific individuals are agents. The most important task is to make the American public aware that this campaign is going on and that the American media have been overly influenced by it." Thus absolved of presenting any hard evidence, he writes of "Zig-zag Parallelism," the changing of opinions on policy matters at roughly the same time that the Communist position shifts, as proof of disinformation's impact.

This stance is both deceitful and absurd. There is, and Tyson cannot help but know it, no Communist line on world affairs. To parallel both the Soviet

## SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander





## AUTOBIOGRAPHY

# The heart of Maya Angelou

**The Heart of a Woman**  
By Maya Angelou  
Random House, 272 pp., \$12.50

By Barbara Christian

*The Heart of a Woman* is Maya Angelou's fourth volume in the series of her autobiographical works. The first volume, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) is practically synonymous with her name. It depicts the growing up of Marguerite Johnson and her brother Billy as they encounter racism, and explores the ways of survival they inherit from a black folk tradition. The second volume, *Gather Together in My Name* (1975) focuses on Angelou's struggle to raise her son Guy by herself, while the third, *Singin' Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* is primarily about her singing and dancing career. Though Angelou's autobiographies are her best known works, she has written three volumes of poetry, many TV adaptations and has directed a film and a musical. She is clearly an energetic woman with much resilience.

*The Heart of a Woman* is the fast-moving story of Angelou's multi-faceted adult life. She guides us through her second marriage, comments on her relationship with her mother now that they are both grown women and describes her relationship with her adolescent son. The book begins with her mother's reactions to the way Maya is bringing up her son in Sausalito, Cal., and ends with Maya's sense of accomplishment as her son leaves her to enter college.

Since this phase of her life occurred during the '60s, there is a counterpoint in this volume between Angelou's personal life and the social worlds of the civil rights and African liberation movements in which she was active. *The Heart of a Woman* is studded with anecdotes about movers of this period with whom Angelou had some relationship: political figures Martin Luther King and Malcolm X; black writers James Baldwin and Paule Marshall; jazz artists Billie Holiday and Abbey Lincoln. The places described in this book are equally cosmopolitan—Hollywood, New York, London, Cairo, Accra.

We learn about how she and Godfrey Cambridge put together a successful presentation of black talent for the benefit of Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and about her involvement in the Harlem Writers Guild. She describes how her friendship with other black women resulted in the organization of the Cultural Association for Women of African Heritage, which led a protest at the United Nations on the occasion of Lumumba's murder.

## Love and marriage.

We learn also about the trials of raising a teenage boy on the streets of New York City and about Maya's marriage to an African freedom fighter who expects her to be a traditional African wife. That marriage takes her to London and Cairo

where we are introduced to a milieu of Africans both culturally similar and dissimilar to Maya. Maya and her husband are finally separated, but only after a community of Africans hear both his and her side and rule in Maya's favor.

*The Heart of a Woman* is a potpourri of events in Angelou's personal life as they connect with social movements of the period. The book is summed up by one of its first sentences: "We were a-moverin' to, fro, up down and often in concentric circles," and because it is so fast-moving, covering so much ground so quickly it has a light feeling throughout. As autobiography, it tells us a great deal about the external outlines of Angelou's life without revealing much of her inner complexity; as commentary on the times, it touches on events so quickly, one has a feeling of a collage rather than an in-depth view. Fleeting images rather than issues are presented.

Angelou tries to counter this feeling of lightness by inserting Afro-American folk history and sayings or brief philosophical intrusions at moments in her

narrative when self-revelation or analysis would seem forthcoming. For example, when Vus, her husband-to-be first meets her son Guy, Maya is clearly worried about what her son's response will be. She tells Guy she loves him and he responds, "You know Mom that sounds just like goodbye." The narrator intrudes with a generalization that deflates the intensity of this moment: "The sensuality between parents and children often is so intense that only the age-old control by society prevents the rise of sexuality." For a brief paragraph, this issue is quickly discussed.

Another such deflection of emotion occurs when Angelou meets with wives of other African freedom fighters in London. They discuss their feelings of uselessness imposed upon them by their marital state, because they had been active participants in the struggle. One woman even pulls up her dress showing her sisters the terrible scar she received from a bullet. The moment is dramatic, but again the narrator intrudes, briefly telling us about an Afro-American spiritual about resistance, breaking the intensity of the woman's story and distancing both the narrator and the reader from the scene.

## Freedom stories.

Since the slave narrative appeared in the 19th century, auto-

biography has been a major form of expression in the culture of Afro-Americans. It was often through this form that black persons arrived at their own definition of self, rather than the definition imposed upon them by the society. The act of writing about their lives became a liberation in itself, as seen in the great autobiography of Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington's *Up From Slavery*, Wright's *Black Boy* and Angelou's own *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. There is as well the more general American popular form of the celebrity autobiography, which is more a recounting of famous people met and accomplishments achieved.

*The Heart of a Woman* falls into the category of the latter while taking on aspects of the former. Angelou does not, however, go through the rigorous and thoughtful analysis of the self in relation to the society that is at the core of serious Afro-American autobiography. Because so many vital areas of concern could be the subject of such reflection—the movements she participated in, her sense of herself as a single black mother, her marriage to a freedom fighter who denies social justice for his wife—I, for one, am left with a sense of frustration and loss.

Barbara Christian chairs the Department of Afro-American Studies at University of California at Berkeley.

Maya Angelou's life story partakes both of Afro-American history and of celebrity biography.



and Chinese lines would require some fancy zigging and zagging indeed. Moreover, opinion makers in the East and West are partly bound to reflect on real events. When, for example, it became obvious that the Shah could not hold power, the Soviets made overtures to Iranian opposition groups and farsighted American policymakers urged the U.S. to do the same. No sex, alcohol nor blackmail entered into this coincidence.

Tyson also submits "balance sheets" to show the influence of Communist disinformation. In high bourgeois fashion, he heads the columns on each sheet "Debts" (for articles critical of U.S. military, diplomatic or intelligence policies) and "Credits" (for pro-American, Cold War articles). An appendix lists the records of Seymour Hersh, Morton Halperin, Saul Landau, Gareth Porter, the Center for National Security Studies and IPS—all of whom have no "credits." Tyson ignores IPS director Richard Barnett's repeated criticisms of Soviet actions and the support for Soviet and East European dissidents by *In These Times* in constructing his balance sheets. Such errors may result from fatigue; in any event, Tyson is anxious to share the arduous task of journalist accounting. *Target America* proposes that the FBI should help, by initiating the "monitoring of Soviet propaganda efforts in the U.S."

Tyson establishes the anti-Americanism of his subjects with consummate ease. He lists the members of think tanks with brief capsule biographies designed to show the terrible tenor of the groups. But I get confused. Why, for instance, is it ominous that Nicole Szulc, affiliated with the Center for National Security Studies, is "daughter of journalist Tad Szulc?" Can we really blame Reed Rubin, of the Rubin Foundation, for being "named for John Reed?" For me the only damning charge was one levelled against the leftwing philanthropist Samuel Rubin, who is said to have "built Faberge into a multimillion dollar enterprise selling scents like 'Aphrodesia' and 'Tigress'." Will these subversives stop at nothing?

They can't fool James Tyson. He knows how meaningful it is when two groups have their offices in the same building. He knows that a Communist is red for life—thus Jessica Mitford is an "admitted Communist." And he does not give an inch. Saul Landau is not a Fellow at IPS; he's a "fellow." Halperin is no expert on the CIA; he's an "expert." Leftist institutes are directed by so-called "boards" and criticize alleged abuses like "racism."

The whole idea of massive Soviet influence over the U.S. media ought to be ludicrous to anyone who owns a TV. I'd like to suggest an alternative conspiracy just to keep paranoid reactionaries guessing. Maybe the Russians, frustrated over failed efforts to disinform us, are testing a new tack. Through books like *Target America* and magazines like *National Review*, they are creating a climate in which it will be dangerous for American journalists to agree with the Soviet Union on anything. Then by disingenuously switching lines the Soviets will be able to manipulate the entire American media at will. As any of the Bowery Boys might have put it, "Ya call dis informed?"

Dave Roediger teaches history at Northwestern.





## HISTORY

# Our strategic Asian friends

**The United States and the Philippines: A Study of Neo-colonialism**

By Stephen Roskamm Shalom  
Institute for the Study of  
Human Issues, 302 pp., \$19.50

By Paul Wolman

It was the Philippines, Stephen R. Shalom tells us, that Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk described in 1950 as "a laboratory sample of the choice which exists between our kind of world and the kind of world on the other side of the Iron Curtain." Shalom examines the subjects, procedures and results of the Philippine experiment in the post-World War II period.

This is a detailed and sometimes indignant account of the

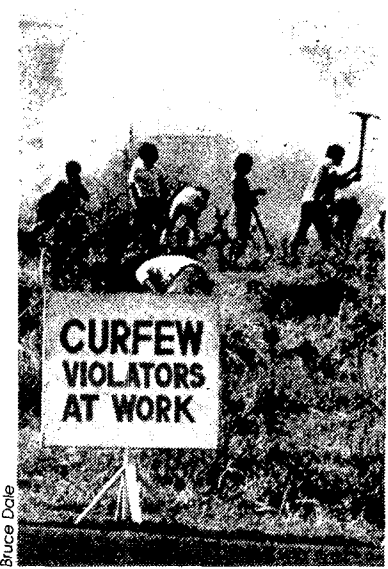
Philippines' political movement from outright subordination during the Commonwealth period, through the Japanese occupation, independence, internal struggles with nationalist-leftist guerillas, the Huks, into status as a U.S. ally and client state under the martial-law regime of Ferdinand Marcos. For Shalom, the thread linking these phases is the evolving cooperation of U.S. and Philippine "elites." The book is equally a polemic: supported by a barrage of statistics on land use, distribution of wealth, ownership of vital resources, Shalom argues that the bond between the elites has been forged through their mutual efforts to suppress Philippine popular and national goals.

Shalom's historical introduc-

tion to the Filipino elite is unsparing. It was, he argues, a class conditioned to colonial domination and political opportunism, serving the Japanese occupiers "with alacrity," yet eager to "play both sides" in the Pacific conflict for personal advantage. The Americans are scrutinized as well. Sketched are General Douglas MacArthur's connections with the Philippine leaders whose fortunes he protected before, during, and after the war. These included Spanish Falangist and Philippine mining entrepreneur Andres Soriano; Jose Laurel, president of the Japanese-controlled wartime government; and Manuel Roxas, the Commonwealth politician and collaborationist minister whom MacArthur "rescued" from the Japanese to install as a postwar power broker.

Shalom suggests that American support for rapid postwar Philippine independence was heavily influenced by the desire to loosen restrictions on capital flow into Southeast Asia and other Allied-dominated colonial areas. American officials such as Acheson and Rusk intended to manage the redevelopment of the war-damaged Philippine infrastructure so that the Philo-

pines would become one of the "best customers for U.S. goods" and a "great gateway for trade with the teeming millions of the Orient." Shalom's chief interest in the early chapters is to show how State Department officials established the exemplary orientation of the Philippine economy within a critical first five or 10 years of recovery. He discusses legislation such as the Bell Trade Act of 1946, which pegged the value of the inflated peso to that of the dollar, *Martial law makes for hard labor.*



and aimed at reestablishing the elites of Philippine and foreign manufacturers through the assignment of absolute export quotas based on shares of pre-war production.

Shalom's chapters on the '50s chronicle the involvement of U.S. policymakers and political operatives—such as the CIA agent Edward Lansdale, promoter of the "popular image" of Ramon Magsaysay—in plans to abort the rise of grassroots Philippine nationalism, to suppress the persistent attraction of the Huks, to assure ample supplies of cheap labor, and later to build a caste of military leaders dependent on U.S. training, weaponry, and goodwill. (By 1959, Shalom calculates, there were four times as many commissioned and noncommissioned officers in the Philippine army as there were privates.) The fact that the CIA has continuously thwarted the author's Freedom of Information Act requests for information lends additional credibility to what Shalom has pieced together from available archival materials.

A couple of problems blemish this work. The latter chapters are, even considering the restrictions on evidence gathering,

## Milk

Continued from page 16

and formula are physiologically identical. Many of these future pediatricians also said they found breast-feeding in public distasteful.

If the League is to win that fight, however, it has to shed its ladylike '50s image, say critics, and recognize its strength. "I think it's too much in the minds of the leaders how weak they were when they started, rather than how strong they are now," said one health activist who has worked closely with the League.

League supporters would like it to get more involved, for instance, in the campaign against infant formula abuse, including the boycott in this country of products made by Nestle, the largest manufacturer of baby formula in the Third World. The boycott was organized by the Infant Formula Action Coalition (INFAC).

This summer, INFAC joined several other groups in petitioning the Food and Drug Administration to require the promotion of breast-feeding in American hospitals receiving federal funds, as well as clearer labelling on formula cans to prevent dangerous over- or under-dilution; misuse that has been documented in low-income areas in this country. The League did not endorse

that petition. It did send two representatives to Geneva in 1979 to work on the World Health Organization's code on baby formula misuse, which is blamed for millions of infant deaths. And the League sent a telegram to President Reagan urging him, in vain, to support the code.

But while League member are encouraged individually to support the Nestle boycott, the League as a whole has refused to take part in it. Marian Thompson said the League did not want to single out any one formula company.

Someone active in the formula

misuse campaign wondered recently whether the League is afraid of supporting any political issue for fear of eventually being drawn into the abortion debate, something the founding mothers, all Catholics, could never support. (Although nonsectarian, the League is even named for *Nuestra Senora de La Leche y Buen Parto*, Our Lady of Plentiful Milk and Good Delivery, a Spanish Catholic patroness of

motherhood.)

League officials contend that any stance on such touchy matters as abortion or the Equal Rights Amendment, for instance, would split the League right down the middle. Members who can't agree on Right to Life or pro-choice can always agree on breast-feeding.

But change is coming, if very slowly. The league has pilot projects aimed at working and low-

income mothers, although they are still in an experimental stage.

"Up to now our whole approach has been geared to mothers who stayed at home," says Betty Ann Countryman, another founding mother. "But we want to help any mother who needs it, and we may have to adjust to the times."

Mary Ellen Schoonmaker is a reporter for the Bergen (N.J.) Record.

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skimpier and more diffuse than the initial, historical chapters. There are very brief segments on the role of the Peace Corps and AID and a better one on the development of counterinsurgency techniques and pre-Vietnam experiments with napalm. Too much of Shalom's work is buried in the end notes, which comprise 97 pages—a heavy ballast for 187 pages of text. In any case his argument becomes attenuated, and as if to compensate, the writing becomes rhetor-

ic-laden, acquiring a shrill tone at times.

The more significant problem with Shalom's approach hinges on his use of "neocolonialism." He clearly wants his research on the Philippines to offer a vantage point from which to view "studies of modern imperialism," and the role of the U.S. in international affairs. But since Shalom uses neocolonialism in a primary political sense, to denote Philippine independence, it becomes too narrow to serve as

an effective tool of analysis for the complexities of the political-economic relations. Neocolonialism for U.S. policymakers hinged not on the decisions relating to formal political control, nor as such on the corruption of "the elites" but more fundamentally on the U.S.'s embarkation on a new course of "industrial colonialism" of capital export and development of foreign markets and resources. Shalom does not recognize in this work that this new departure, sharply distinct

from the era of European "commercial colonialism," began early in the 20th century with the emergence of the large industrial corporation. It was the men of this period, such as political scientist-diplomat Paul Reinsch and financial expert Charles A. Conant, who adapted the idea of the "personal agency" of the colonial administrator as a cultivator of native elites to the requirements of "modern" political economy, and who pioneered the techniques of financial stabilization in the

tropics as the instrument of metropolitan national and corporate class policy. In short, the Philippine neocolonial laboratory had been open for business 50 years before the Dean Rusk and Acheson.

This fact makes Shalom's contention—that it was the American "experiment" that cultivated the soil for Marcos' martial regime—all the more difficult to refute.

Paul Wolman is writing a Ph.D. dissertation on the origins of American raw materials policy.

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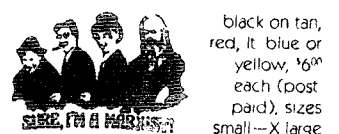
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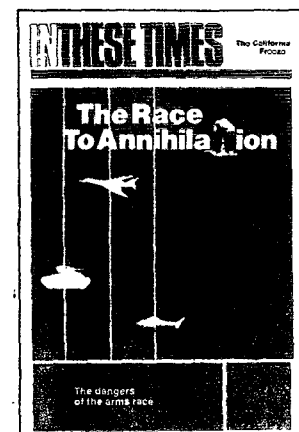


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# Testing The Formula

By Mary Ellen Schoonmaker

GOING TO A LA LECHE MEETING is like going to hear the old Catholic mass in Latin. You know no matter where you go, it is always the same. A living room is filled with pregnant women and young mothers with infants. Books on child care are on the dining room table next to the homemade coffee cake. Breast-feeding theory is supplied by an instructor, called a leader, and demonstrated by the nursing mothers present. When in doubt, picture yourself as a cave woman," league leader Anne Metzler told a dozen women in a living room in Parsippany, N.J. this fall. The league encourages mothers to rely on themselves. "If you're breast feeding in the hospital and the nurse brings you a bottle of water for the baby, dump it out or water the plants with it," Metzler said, explaining that any supplement to breast-feeding can hinder the supply-demand mechanism that makes it work. "Assert yourself, in a friendly way. It is your baby."

The League, which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1981, has 12,500 well-trained instructors nationwide reaching hundreds of thousands of women each year, and active branches in 42 countries, most recently El Salvador.

Members have been bucking the medical establishment for a quarter of a century. The Parsippany group cheered one mother who had recently nursed her six-week premature son despite almost un-

bearable pressure from her doctor and family. The baby, which weighed four pounds, 13 ounces at birth, actually lost 12 ounces in the hospital.

"I almost went crazy," the woman said, cradling the blonde boy in her arms, "but I stuck it out." When she got the baby home, he gained three pounds in a few weeks. "I realized they just were not bringing him to me to breast feed often enough in the hospital. That's why he was losing weight."

## Total mothering.

La Leche League has many interesting parallels to the women's movement. It is woman-founded, started in 1956 by seven Illinois housewives, and based on a mother-to-mother network of instruction and support. An international authority on breast-feeding, it also raised a loud voice in favor of natural childbirth years before it was fashionable.

"We are feminists," said Elaine Frey, a league leader in Brooklyn, N.Y. "We have made women more aware of their bodies."

But in another way, the league is like a mirror image of the feminist movement. Through the years the league motto, "good mothering through breast-feeding," has come to mean a kind of Ten Commandments all League instructors must live by. These concepts, built around the belief that baby knows best and comes first, include nursing until baby decides it's time to stop (which can take two or three years), and staying home through the child's early years at least, to insure "total mothering." The best way a father can support a mother, according to this creed, is financially.

True, feminists can take a lesson from any group that said, all those years when nobody else was saying it, that mother's work was just as important as the board president's. But the League is reluctant to deal with the agonizing dilemmas facing growing numbers of women who are trying to combine motherhood with a career. As of this spring, according to Labor Department statistics released in October, nearly 45 percent of all preschool children had mothers, who by choice or necessity, were either working or looking for work. The League's advice to mothers in financially-pressed families is to stay home and make money selling Tupperware or something.

Marian Thompson, a League founder and president until last year, says she can't envision the day when working mothers with small children will be League instructors, or the day when the League will lobby for day care, more flexible hours on the job or even longer paid maternity leaves.

"We'll write letters to a company asking for an extended maternity leave, but we do it on a one-to-one basis," she said. "Once we start pushing for changes in working conditions, then we are saying there is a standard that women should work. A lot of women really want to stay home. We must hold the line and stick to that truth."

At a Manhattan meeting recently, a mother who worked three days a week asked what food or vitamins would help her pump more of her own milk, so she could store it in bottles. The answer she got from League instructor Beth Styer was, "Your baby is the best breast pump. The more it nurses, the more milk you'll have."

Of course, it's a relief to some women to learn they don't have to feel guilty about putting family first. More and more women these days desperately need someone to tell them it's all right if they can't reach the top of their careers and be supermoms and keep their marriages going all by themselves. But those women don't need Tupperware. They need help, both inside and outside the family.

## Out of the '50s.

Critics blame the League for simply refusing to see that times are changing.

While she was a La Leche leader years ago, Doris Haire wrote a pamphlet on breast-feeding which said an occasional bottle of formula was okay. For that, she was kicked out of the League.

Since then Haire, who heads the American Foundation for Maternal and Child Health, a maternal rights group, has become a leader in the drive to lower the rate of unnecessary Caesarian sections. Now back on good terms with the League, she lectured at its convention in Chicago this summer and supports its work wholeheartedly.

But she'd like to see it more active in a number of areas, from doing more to fight the rising number of surgical deliveries, which are less conducive to breast-feeding, to giving more support to working mothers.

"I wrote another pamphlet called 'Simple Instructions for Nursing a Baby,' which was approved by the American Academy of Pediatrics," Haire said recently on her way to study childbirth in China. "In it I talked about working mothers and how a bottle of formula is all right when you're away at the office. After all, some breast-feeding is better than no breast-feeding. The League wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole."

Norma Swenson, an author of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and a member of the National Women's Health Network, said that whether they realize it or not,

League leaders are opening themselves to a strong right-wing element.

"They're preparing the ground for the work Phyllis Schlafly is doing, even though they might not sign on for her [anti-Equal Rights Amendment] campaign," Swenson said recently.

The group's philosophy comes from its founders. Two of them, Marian Thompson and Mary White, met at a picnic, each delighted to find a kindred spirit when it came to breast-feeding. In the '50s the nation was just starting its love affair with technology, including prepared baby formula. White and Thompson contacted a few friends and began meeting in each others' living rooms in suburbs around Chicago, sharing how-to tips and boosting morale.

In the last 10 years research has proven what they were saying all along, that breast milk is unequalled in its medical and nutritional value, and far superior to formula. Breast-feeding is on the increase at all income levels, particularly among white middle-class women, the same white middle-class women who make up the ranks of the League.

But the fight is far from over. Many poor and blue-collar women, those who can least afford it, still see baby formula as the status symbol it was in the '50s. And many doctors still don't know the difference between breast milk and formula. A recent informal survey of a small number of pediatric residents in medical school in New York City showed that 13 out of 14 believe breast milk

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For 25 years the La Leche League has fiercely defended women's right to breast-feed. But the League's narrow definition of the issue may now be working against its goal.



Paul Comstock